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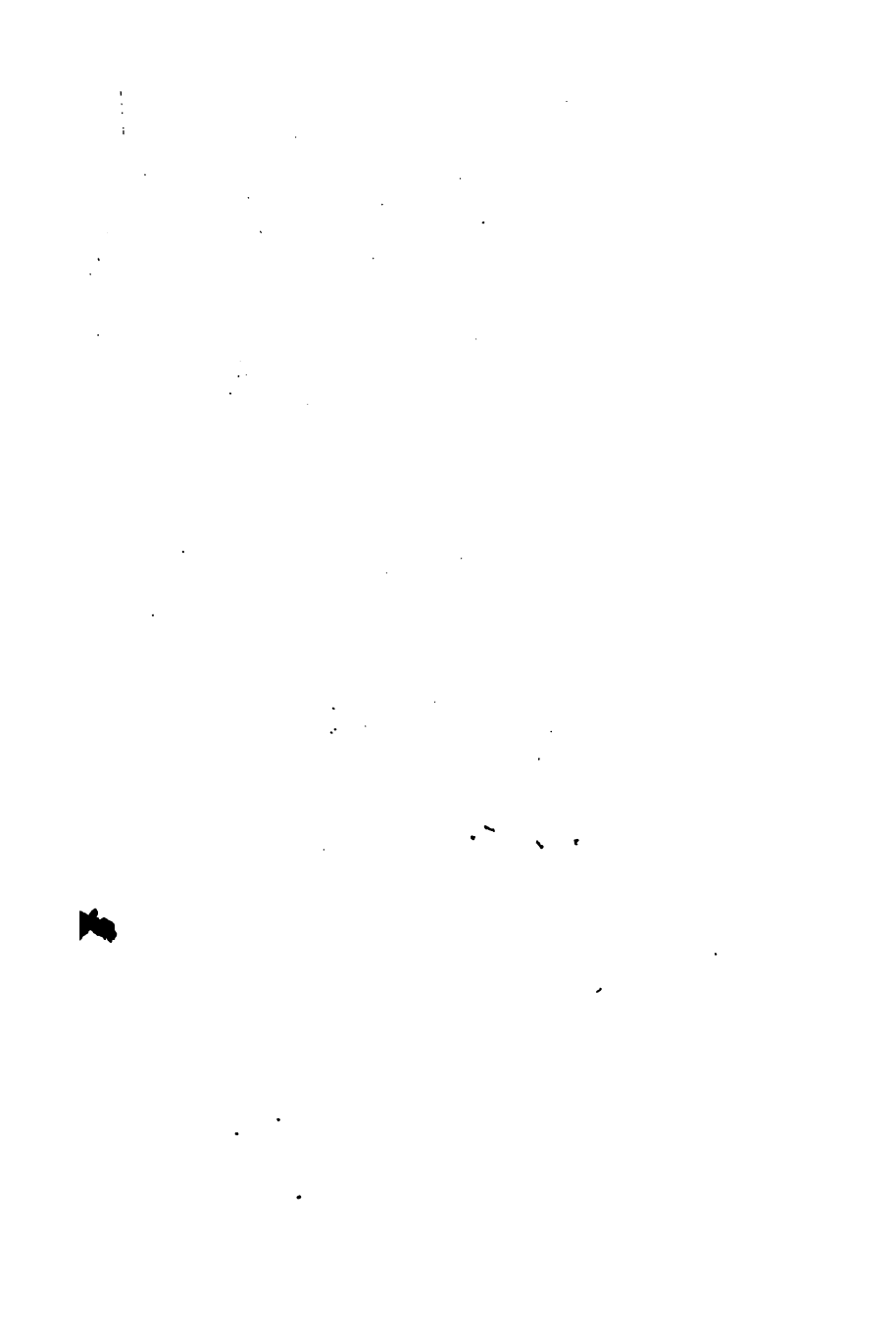
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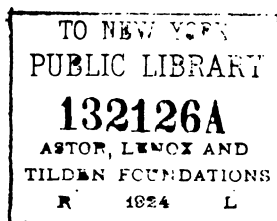
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MIDDLETOWN VALLEY IN SONG AND STORY.



BY
T. C. HARBAUGH.

1910



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T. C. HARBAUGH.

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WHEN "JIM" CAME BACK.

A STORY OF THE CATOCTIN.

YEARS ago, but not so many that they have passed from the memory of man, the Magruders, who lived at what is now known as the Koogle bridge, west of Middletown, were famous horsemen. They had inherited this love of sport from their ancestors and the race track on their tract of land, just back of where the old barn now stands, witnessed many a stirring scene. Famous racers were brought from Virginia and the Carolinas, and under the whip and spur, ridden by black slaves, they flew around the track, and many a good hard dollar changed hands. It was also the day of unadulterated liquor and the participants drank from the same bottle with true Southern gusto.

Among these horses was one from North Carolina, a splendid black, famous for his endurance and speed. He was owned by a Colonel Kitchen, himself a noted turfman throughout the South, and the Colonel, who, by the way, fell at Gettysburg, always came up loaded with money, which he staked without stint on his favorite. He brought with him his own jockey, a wiry little mulatto, who could stick to a horse like a plaster. Jim and the black were inseparable, in fact, it might be said that both had been reared in the same stall.

One Autumn day, Magruder had for his guests a bevy of horsemen, for a great race was on hand. The best horses of the South were there and the usual amount of hilarity and excitement was on tap. The track had

been put in order for the event and the whole country seemed to have gathered for the races. Colonel Kitchen was everywhere, offering to stake his last dollar and slave on Selim, as he called the black horse, and there were few who were bold enough to meet him with the money bags.

"You all," exclaimed the North Carolinian, "haven't got the spunk of a common tarheel. It's five to one on Selim and if he doesn't win, I'll shoot him dead on the course."

His persistent banter was at last taken up by a lank Virginian, who entered a measly-looking bay, whose ribs were plainly observable. The Virginian, who seemed pretty flush, put up all the cash he had and cursed himself for not having brought more along. No one seemed to know him, and Magruder himself declared he had never heard of the gentleman.

The betting excited every one and when the two horses had been pitted against one another, the crowd could hardly contain itself. The signal was finally given and black and bay started off in one of the most spirited contests ever witnessed on the Magruder track. It was a half-mile dash, with two heats.

The first lap was easily won by the North Carolina horse, with the bay lagging, but to the astonishment of all, when they came down the track for the last time, the bay was forging to the front. He seemed to have the speed of a demon in his long limbs, and though little Jim put forth his utmost efforts, and Selim did his level best, the Virginia nag came under the pole a good neck ahead.

There was a yell from the crowd, and a surging forward toward the panting horses, when Colonel Kitchen stepped forward, white-faced, and with a pistol in his hand.

"Stand back, gentlemen!" he exclaimed. "The black *has* lost and a Kitchen never breaks his word."

The crowd parted, then came the loud report of a weapon and Selim, with a tremor in every limb, threw up his noble head and dropped in his tracks, shot through the brain. The silence that followed this brutal act is indescribable. Men stood as if stunned; they looked at the horse, then at his master, who held the smoking pistol in his hands. No one spoke.

Little Jim, dazed as much as anybody, cast a last, longing glance at his dead companion and slipped away in the crowd. The races for the day were over. The Virginian pocketed his earnings and rode across the creek with an amused smile on his face, while Colonel Kitchen bundled up the few things he had brought along, took his last drink at the bar of the Middletown tavern and vanished with Jim.

A year later there appeared an advertisement in a North Carolina newspaper offering a reward for a runaway negro called "Jim." The notice was signed by Colonel Leslie Kitchen, but it was barren of results, for Jim had disappeared so effectively that nothing more was heard of him.

By and by strange rumors began to be circulated in the Catoclin Valley. It was said that nearly every night at 12:00, a black horse, ridden by a boy as black, was seen on the Magruder track. The superstitious never went near the place and it was said that Magruder, in his cups, affirmed the story.

The old slave owner had a slave named Ephraim, a negro whose age was quite uncertain and Uncle Eph, the most unsuperstitious of the slaves, was inclined to laugh at the story of the spectral horse and his rider. He didn't believe in "spooks," so he didn't, those who did were "no-account niggers," and Marse Magruder should tie every last one of them to the whipping-post.

"I'll tell you," said Uncle Eph, "no good will eber come o' talkin' about ghosts. Dar's no sich thing nowadays an'

dar hasn't been none since de days o' de Witch o' Endor, what de Good Book tells about."

"You'll see it fo' yerself one o' dese nights," put in Aunt Susie. "You des talkin' erbout no spooks ter keep yer courage up. Des you wait till you see de black hoss an' little Jim on de ole track an' den—"

"Shut up! Don't you remember how you see'd de ghost on de mountain when it turned out ter be ole Remsberg's white cow dat got lost?"

This generally silenced Aunt Susie and for a few days Uncle Eph would hear no more about the race track ghost.

It came about one night that some of the Magruder cattle did not come up and Uncle Eph, who generally took care of them, became uneasy and started out to find the truants. He wandered up and down the banks of Catoctin creek calling for the cattle until the hour became so ghostly that he was afraid to remain out longer and turned his footsteps homeward. An owl in an oak added greatly to his fears and the weird croaking of the frogs in the marshes did not allay his fright.

When he came to the abandoned race track behind the barn he stopped as one who had suddenly come face to face with the dead. A silver crescent hung languidly in the sky and now and then it was obscured by a bank of filmy clouds. Uncle Eph, trembling in every limb, saw something on the race course.

"Huh!" he said, bolstering up his fast vanishing courage. "Dat's one o' Aunt Susie's spooks, I reckon. De ole woman oughter be hyar an' see it fo' herself. Dat's no spook, Uncle Ephraim; dat's des de emagernation of an ole nigger."

But while he looked he became convinced that an "ole nigger" must have a mighty vivid imagination to conjure up a horse on Magruder's track when he knew every horse about the place was safely housed in the barn.

At last he managed to reach a large tree not far from the fringe of the old track, and there, with bulging eyes and the ghost ague in every joint he peered forward.

Sure enough, there was something on the track. It grew into a horse and his rider, and Uncle Eph started at it with his blood checked in his veins.

"By my life!" he muttered, "it's Jim an' de black hoss. Dar's no use talkin', dey's both come back from de dead; back ter Marse Magruder's track. Fo' de Lawd, what would Aunt Susie say now?"

He drew away with a gasp as the object swayed toward him, and clutched the oak for support, and there he stood breathless, and a shade paler than his natural color, while he gazed at the apparition.

Suddenly, when near the judge's pole, the black steed gave a lurch and pitched forward, going down while his rider struck the ground some distance away. It was more than the old slave could stand, and with a yell that awoke the echoes of the night, he bounded away as if a legion of fiends was at his heels. He did not look where he was going, nor did he know until he tripped and landed headforemost in the creek.

"Huh!" he jaculated, "dat's de second baptism I've had in my time. De fust one didn't cure me o' de ghost fright an' dis one—"

He paused and laughed at himself, then, shaking the water from his person, he turned back. Courage seemed to have come to him through the sudden immersion and he retraced his steps toward the old race course. Venturing to look forward he discerned something on the ground, and creeping nearer he saw a horse half doubled up and motionless. Not far away lay another object, and when Uncle Eph reached it he looked into the pain-drawn face of a young mulatto.

"Fo' de god Lawd!" he exclaimed. "Little Jim's come back. Why, I see'd Colonel Kitchen shoot de black hoss

an' go off with Jim, but hyar dey both am, Jim and Selim."

It took all the courage Uncle Eph could muster to touch the boy on the ground, but the moment that he discovered that life still fluttered in the little frame, he tenderly lifted it in his arms and bolted toward the house. He did not pause until he crossed the National Pike and reached the yard, where he set up a series of cries almost sufficient to rouse the dead.

Slaves swarmed from the shanties and Magruder himself, attracted by the commotion, appeared on the scene.

"It's little Jim!" cried Uncle Eph, as he extended the boy in his arms. "De black am on de track, an' hyar's ole Colonel Kitchen's nigger what rode de spook hoss."

The mulatto boy was carried into the house and laid on the best Magruder bed. A doctor was sent for from Middletown, but the last flutter of life was near at hand. Only once did the boy open his lips.

"Ise Kunnel Kitchen's Jim," he said in a whisper. "I ran away from de ole marster kase he whip me fo' losin' de race, an' I find one o' Selim's colts in Virginny. Ebery night we'se been practisin' on de ole track an' I thought dat some day I'd win de race fo' de ole marster."

That was all. Jim had come back. When the poor, bruised spirit of the little jockey had taken its flight to a land where there are no whipping posts, Aunt Susie and her companions arrayed the fragile body for the grave and in a secluded spot within sound of the rippling Catoctin, and close to the old race track, they buried little Jim. And for years Uncle Ephraim, who lived to be free, would steal to the spot and scatter the choicest flowers of the valley upon it.

"Thank God fo' bringin' little Jim back," he would say. "It was ordained dat he should ride ole Selim's colt ober de track and sleep under de wild roses o' ole Maryland. I des knowed all de time dat it was no spook





THE OLD KELLER MILL.

an' Aunt Susie better nebber say 'spook' to dis nigger
any mo.' "



THE OLD VALLEY MILLS.

There comes to me now o'er the mountains of blue
The music of burrs that our grandfathers knew—
The splash and the dash of the old waterwheels,
Half choked in the dawn with a bevy of eels;
I see the trim millers in garments of white
Who took in the harvests from morning till night,
And the teams with the bells that came over the hills
With many a grist for the Old Valley Mills.

They stood in their strength by the rivers that run
Thro' the shadows of oak to the oceans of sun,
Behind them the mountains that stared at the sky,
Before them the vistas of corn and of rye,
I see the young urchins who long ago rode
Hatless on top o' the lumbering load;
And the horses that drank from the depths of the rills
As they paused on their way to the Old Valley Mills.

Tho' some are in ruins and their usefulness gone
Their fame to the ages goes quietly on.
The races that fed the old wheels in their day
In the mists of the Past have all vanished away;
The owl hoots at night in the willows that grew
Where the miller took toll that was honest and true,
And the millers who ground in the shade of the hills
Are sleeping not far from the Old Valley Mills.

Aye, where are the farmers who drove the great teams
That back to me come even now in my dreams?

They're gone with the miller who took in the grain,
The crack of their whips we shall hear not again;
Catoctin flows on where the burrs sang their song,
And frogs croaked their music the tail-race along,
And the miller's good wife, unaccustomed to frills,
Is seen never more at the Old Valley Mills.

The few that are left standeth ancient and lone,
With moss on the shingles and stone upon stone,
But Memory comes with her beautiful thrall
To crown the old spots that are dear to us all;
The grasses may grow where the old millers sleep,
And silences reign where the tall willows weep,
And no boy whistles now in the heart of the hills,
As he carries the grist to the Old Valley Mills.



THE TANYARD MYSTERY.

THE HANDS of various clocks in Middletown were indicating nine when Miss Lizzie Koon, who lived near the old Schlosser tannery on West Main street, had occasion to open the front door and look out. She was never able to say just what impelled her to perform this particular act at this particular time, nor would she ever admit that she expected Joe Stemmer, one of the tannery's employees who was her supposed lover.

It was in the fall of the year and the foliage of the trees had been touched by the early frosts. The night was clear and the sky was a vast diamond field of brilliant stars. Lizzie always said there was a great double star over South Mountain that night which was a token of something bad. But, then, Miss Koon was a trifle *superstitious*.

When she looked out she descried a figure moving

toward the tannery and while she gazed it disappeared, or at least the old building got between her and the object. The tannery, as many will remember, was a long, rambling two-story structure. The basement contained the vat room, bark-shed, engine room, etc., and went out level with the backyard, in which there were also vats. The second story came out level with Canaan Road and was the storage and finishing department. The place was rather "spooky" after dark, and timid people frequently gave it a wide berth.

It had been rumored of late that attempts would be made to fire the tannery and, remembering this, Lizzie Koon gave the mysterious figure more than a passing look. She wondered what the man could be doing about the tannery at that hour. She first thought of rousing her mother who was in the house, but on second thought resolved to investigate for herself.

Closing the door she slipped away and was soon at the tannery property. A door had been left ajar, proving that the man had entered the place, and Lizzie proceeded on tiptoe to enter. Her steps led her to the finishing room, where, to her surprise, she discovered two men whose faces were partially revealed by an oil lamp.

One of these men was John Engert who, though a tannery employe, was sometimes called "the banker," because he nearly always had money to loan. The other man she did not know. She was watching the couple closely when she was gripped from behind and warned in a whisper to be silent on pain of death. Turning her face she saw that the man was a stranger.

"Not a word, Miss Curiosity," said the man. "If you want to live you will keep a still tongue in your head."

In another moment the girl was hustled from the spot but with her last look toward the two men she saw the stranger hand the "banker" a thick roll of bills. Then she was at the door with the hand of her captor still at her wrist.

"Now go home and to bed," commanded the man. "If you breathe a word about what you've seen there'll be a funeral in Middletown."

Awed by the stranger's threat and quite unnerved, Lizzie obeyed to the letter, but there was little sleep for her eyes the remainder of the night. However, the next night at the same hour she looked out and saw the same man approaching the tannery. This time, recalling her previous experience, she did not investigate and in a little while she was entertaining Joe Stemmer.

"Lizzie," said Joe, after an embarrassing lull in the conversation, "I'm going to invest."

"In what? I did not know you had money for that."

"But I have,—now. A rich uncle has died in Ohio and left me two thousand dollars, and I'm going to put it in a farm out there."

"That's queer," said the simple-minded girl. "It is the first time you ever mentioned this Ohio uncle."

"Truth is, Lizzie, I never thought much of him, least I never expected he would leave me anything," and Joe, shifting uneasily in his chair, avoided the girl's gaze.

"Now that I'm fixed, Lizzie," he went on, "don't you think you could go with me to Ohio? We'll have it nice out there, far better than you have it in Middletown, nad we'll be somebody in Ohio."

Lizzie did not know. In the first place it was strange to her that Joe had never mentioned the Ohio uncle, for he was continually talking about his relatives, until she knew the peculiarities of each one. She thought of her adventure in the tannery and what she had seen that same night, as she replied:

"A young girl can't make up her mind right away, Joe. Besides, I'd hate to leave mother to go so far from home."

"But I love you, Lizzie."

"I don't doubt that, Joe, but—"

"Maybe you don't think my uncle left me anything," broke in Stemmer. "Here's proof, Lizzie," and to the girl's surprise he drew forth a roll of crisp banknotes which caused her to open her eyes in amazement.

He unwrapped the package and Lizzie saw that they were large bills which still further increased her astonishment. She had never seen so much money in all her life.

"How did they send it, Joe?" she exclaimed.

"It came by express to Hagerstown. All new, you see, girl, just from the mill," and Joe ran his hand through the bills as he took in the girl's amazement.

"Won't you go after all this, Lizzie?" he went on. "You'll never get another chance like this if I do say it myself."

"I'll have to study over the matter. You know this is rather sudden—"

"That's what you all say even when you've been expecting an offer for years," snapped Joe as he rose from his chair and stowed the bank notes away in his bosom. "Let me tell you one thing, Miss Lizzie Koon," and he shook his finger in her face. "If you don't marry me you won't catch Tobias Riddlemoser."

"Who intimated anything about Tobias Riddlemoser?" cried the girl, as she faced Stemmer with flashing eyes and clenched hands. "I didn't. Since you've come down to threats, Joe Stemmer, I'll just say that you'll have to go to Ohio alone. That's all!"

Mr. Stemmer looked at the girl a moment and backed toward the door. She followed him without a word and as he opened the portal she exclaimed:

"Maybe you can tell me something about the light in the finishing room. It's there now and was there last night."

"How do you know?"

"What are my eyes for? Maybe that Ohio uncle wasn't so rich after all."

Lizzie could never tell why she made this last speech and a moment later she regretted it. Stemmer turned white and came menacingly toward her.

"So, you've been eavesdropping?" he exclaimed. "It's a pretty occupation for a young girl, isn't it? I don't think I'd like you for a wife, anyhow."

"Just as you please, Joe Stemmer. I don't think I'd suit. Good evening."

Joe went out and looked back at the house.

"Pretty curt," he exclaimed. "I wonder if she caught on? The jig's up if she did," and with this he stamped away and disappeared behind the tannery.

That night as she was preparing to retire, Lizzie heard a cry which caused her to throw up the sash of her bedroom window. It commanded a view of the finishing-room of the old tannery. As she leaned over the sill the cry was repeated and she stood transfixed with terror, her hands trembling on the sill itself. At the same time she saw a light flit past one of the tannery windows and disappear. The strange cry was not repeated.

The next night and the next Lizzie watched for the strange man, but he did not come. ~~She~~ She feared to say anything to her people because of Joe Stemmer's fearful threat, but the secret which she carried in her bosom preyed constantly on her mind.

Engert, the banker, loaned money as usual, and Joe made no move toward Ohio. Once or twice she thought of telling her story to Nathan Witter, the saddler, who lived above the spring house on the tannery property, but as often she concluded to keep her knowledge to herself. Not even to the Witter girls, Jennie and Lizzie, her associates, did she breathe a single word.

One night a note was slipped underneath her door. It was from Joe Stemmer and he said he was going to Ohio



"OLD CANAAN STREET" MIDDLETOWN.

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to buy a farm. The next day she did not see him and Ben, the colored man, said that Joe had bidden them all good-bye and had gone "somewhar."

Some months passed away and Lizzie Koon had not told her secret. She shunned the old tannery as if it was a wicked place, but at last when she knew it was deserted she resolved to invade its precincts. It was near the close of a winter day and the last snow of the season was covering the ground with a carpet of white. Engert had gone away on a visit and the other employees had not been about for several days.

The girl inspected the finishing room first and then sought the storage department. Nothing rewarded her. She next descended to the vats and was oppressed by the odors that assailed her. The farther she went the more courageous she became. She had never credited herself with such nerves.

Suddenly she heard a sound that seemed to rivet her to the damp floor. There was just light enough to show her a low and narrow door fixed in the wall of the vat room. The strange sound seemed to come from behind it. An old padlock fastened this door and the girl, after a little search, found a hammer with which she assailed the lock till it yielded. Then she pulled the door open and recoiled with a cry.

Standing against the wall of the little cell before her was the semblance of a man. As Lizzie looked he fell forward with a gasp and lay at her feet. She saw in a moment that the man was dead. With another look and a cry the girl turned and fled. As she passed out of the old tannery Ben, the colored employee, slipped in.

For a whole week Lizzie hovered between life and death in her little home. When she grew strong enough she told her story and an investigation was made, but nothing but the empty cell was found. Engert laughed at the girl's story and said she had "nerves," and it was

not for years afterward that anything came out which threw any light on the mystery. Then it was said that a certain dealer in counterfeit money who was known to have come to Middletown the night of the strange cry from the tannery vanished forever that night, but today the mystery of Schlosser's tannery is as dark as ever.



WHEN I COME BACK TO MIDDLETOWN.

When I come back to Middletown,
Encircled by the mountains blue,
'Mid sunlight fair and shadows brown
And skies that wear the softest hue,
My mind goes back to childhood days,
And Memory her chaplet weaves,
And all the air is filled with lays,
And fairer seem the woodland's leaves.

Catoctin sings a newer song,
And high on old South Mountain's crest
The golden sunlight lingers long
And paints anew the eagle's nest;
Old Braddock, too, a greeting sheds,
Or seems to, where is reared his crown,
And o'er the scene new rapture spreads,
When I come back to Middletown.

I live again the days of yore,
For childhood's dreams return again;
The waves that break on Mem'ry's shore
For me doth never break in vain;

Old faces younger seem to grow,
For recollection will not down,
And hearty handshakes do I know,
When I come back to Middletown.

I hear among the scenes of birth,
A mother's voice so sweet and low,
And echoes once more upon earth
The cradle song of long ago;
To me there is no dearer place,
Beneath the mountain's rugged crown,
Than that which limns her kindly face
Amid the scenes of Middletown.

Long may the vale its beauty shed,
Long may its sky be richly blue,
That bends above our cherished dead,
And shelters friends so kind and true;
Long may Catoctin softly flow,
Thro' passes green and rushes brown,
Long may the bells ring sweet and low
High in the spires of Middletown.

There'll come a time when I no more
Shall tread the vale so dear to me,
When all the memories of yore
Shall pass as pass the cycles free;
But until then, through hopes and fears,
Thro' all those griefs that often drown
The loves of time, I'll keep the years
That brought me back to Middletown.



LEFT TILL CALLED FOR.

IT WAS NEAR the close of what had been a rare October day, a few years before the outbreak of the Civil War, when a stranger entered the unprepossessing store kept by Jacob Neff and his sister Barbara on West Main street, Middletown.

He was a man not very genteely clad, but his features belied his garments and his voice indicated that he was a person of considerable culture. In years he might have been forty, but the stubby beard he wore rather put him beyond that age.

Neff was not in the store at that time and Barbara, who was in charge, appeared to wait on the customer. The stranger asked for a paper of pins and after being served, concluded he would take a spool of thread and half a dozen needles. Barbara carefully wrapped up the articles and took the exact change which the man produced.

Thereupon the customer took from his pocket a carefully wrapped bit of paper, which he opened and laid before the now curious woman. It was all Greek to her, being a mass of lines, dots and little crosses, which might mean much or nothing at all.

"Here," said the man, laying his finger on a certain place, "is where I want to go. They call this spot Koogle's Bridge. How far is it from town?"

Barbara told him one mile.

The finger moved from the bridge and stopped again.

"Here is a house inhabited by Aaron Knodle. Do you know where it is?"

The woman's gaze became a stare. She did not have *any dealings* with the man. He was a newcomer on the

mountain, and there were afloat some unsavory rumors about him. Of late some counterfeit money had been passed in Middletown and the finger of suspicion, which is not always infallible, had been directed at this very man.

Wishing to speak evil of no one, Barbara kindly told the man that she could say nothing about Mr. Knodle, but added that Jacob, her brother, could tell where he lived. Just then Neff made his appearance and supplied the desired information.

"I have a little package which I desire to leave with you till called for," resumed the stranger, at the same time producing a flat package about three inches long by two in width, tied with common wrapping string.

Mr. Neff demurred to being the custodian, but the stranger insisted, offering a five-dollar gold piece for its keep. The Neffs rejected the money, but at last agreed to keep the package "till called for." The man thanked them for their promise and bidding them good day, walked from the store and disappeared.

Days rolled into weeks and the weeks resolved themselves into months, and still the mysterious package remained a charge on the Neffs. More than once they had discussed it and its probable contents, often suspecting that from the stranger's inquiry about Knodle, it contained spurious money, but their curiosity did not get the better of them until a full year had passed.

One night at their little fireside they opened the package and their surprise was complete. Carefully wrapped in the center of the package was a lady's gold watch, the case of which was set with jewels that sparkled in the beams of the household candles. Old Jacob and Barbara stared at one another, too bewildered to speak. They had never seen anything like it. Its fabulous wealth fairly overcame them, and fearful that some pry-

ing eyes might be watching, they returned it to its hiding place in Barbara's bed.

Strange to say, the very next week news reached Middletown that Aaron Knodle had been arrested by Government agents and taken to Hagerstown on a charge of counterfeiting. The arrest again recalled their customer to the Neffs and they began to believe that the owner of the watch had been foully dealt with by Knodle and would never return for his property.

"What shall we do with it?" asked Jacob.

"It was left till called for," responded Barbara. "We can do no more than keep our promise."

"What if he never comes?"

"Even then it is not ours."

Old Jacob was perplexed. He thought of a thousand things that might happen with such a valuable thing in their possession. What if it should invite burglary? They had been robbed once before. While they had breathed their secret to no one, they still feared that it might not be altogether theirs, and thus between fear and expectation, the days passed again.

Not a word had been received of the strange man. No letter had come and the passing weeks only intensified the mystery. Knodle, proven guilty, had been put behind the bars, his house had passed to other tenants and still the jewel-studded timepiece remained in the possession of its perplexed custodians.

Jacob Neff was a close-fisted old man. He trusted no one, kept no book accounts and paid for his goods in the yellow coin of the realm. Mails were slow then and by the time the weekly newspapers reached him their items were stale. He read *The Register*, but it did not reach out into the world then as now, and thus the old merchant was debarred from knowing what mankind was doing.

One night, just as Jacob was closing his store for the

day, a heavy step at the door under the little porch caused him to turn around. In the uncertain light of his oil lamp over against the counter, he saw a man who came forward with eagerness in his eyes.

"You're Jacob Neff, I believe?" said the man.

"Yes, and you're Aaron Knodle."

The presence of the convicted counterfeiter in his little store gave Mr. Neff a shock. He had a wholesome fear of such people, being an honest man himself, and a thought of the money in his till sent a cold chill through his blood.

"Yes, I'm Aaron Knodle, and I'm free," the man said. "I got out yesterday and can't say that I'm sorry, either."

Mr. Neff did not speak.

"I've come for the package," continued Knodle. "You have it yet, I presume?"

"The—package?" stammered Jacob, in a frightened whisper.

"The one that was left here till called for. You know what I mean."

Very well did Neff know. There was but one package in his possession and it contained the jeweled watch. The broad shoulders of the stoutly built Knodle admonished Neff that he was no match for him, and Jacob was a peaceful man—one who had never sought nor had an altercation with any one.

"Come," said Knodle, "give me the package and thus relieve yourself of its custody. He did not say who would call for it, eh?"

"He did not."

"Well, it is called for now."

At this moment Barbara slipped in at the back door and stood staring at the tableau before her. Her look roamed from the man to her brother and back again, but she did not speak.

,"This gentleman has come for the package," said Jacob to his sister.

"But he does not seem to be the gentleman who left it."

"He is not. This is Mr. Knodle."

"What!" exclaimed Barbara with a start. "The Mr. Knodle who——"

"Yes, the Mr. Knodle who was carried away by the Government men," interrupted the counterfeiter, with a grimace. "I am here for the package."

There seemed but one way out of the difficulty and that was to hand over the property.

"You will give us a receipt for the package, I suppose?" ventured old Jacob.

"Certainly, if you wish it."

Barbara was told to get the watch and she slipped away. She did not like the proceeding a little bit. She believed that Aaron Knodle had no right to it, that some foul play was concealed behind his demand, yet she had no proof this. She thought of informing Constable Thomas, but feared that in doing so she would invite calamity.

Perhaps the best thing to do would be to produce the package and turn it over to Knodle. That would be keeping their promise, anyhow, and they would be rid of a dangerous keepsake.

In a few moments Barbara returned with the precious package, which she placed in her brother's hands.

"Please see if all is correct," said Jacob, as he handed the treasure to Knodle. "We are honest people and don't want to be regarded with suspicion."

Knodle at once began to open the package, closely watched all the time by the Neffs. As the watch was revealed to his gaze, he gave a quick start, which told Neff that he had never seen it before. For a moment the old merchant regretted having placed it in his hands.

"It's all right," said Knodle, looking up. "You've kept your part of the bargain, friend Neff."

"I always keep my bargains. Now, Mr. Knodle, will you please tell me what became of the gentleman who left the watch with us?"

Aaron Knodle started visibly at the question. He got red and white by turns.

"I don't see as that has anything to do with the present transaction," said he.

"Very well. I leave that to you, but you are not the person who left the package in our care."

At that moment the front door of the store, creaking a little on its hinges, swung open and Aaron Knodle turned with a quick start.

There stood before him a man well dressed, thin of frame and eager of eye. The watch nearly fell from the counterfeiter's hand. The newcomer took a quick step forward, and, seeming to take in the whole scene at a glance, he cried out:

"So you're out, Aaron Knodle? I've been looking for you for a twelve-month."

"It's the right one!" exclaimed Barbara Neff, with a glance toward her brother.

"Aaron Knodle knows that, madam," cried the stranger. "Don't stir, Aaron. The blow you gave me on the mountain after I told you my story did not quite finish me. You know that a man can be buried and yet live. Strange that you did not go to the bottom and see whether I was yet there. For months my mind was a blank, and not until I recovered, through another blow on the head, did I even know myself and was able to pick up the threads of the past. Please don't move, Mr. Knodle. I am not quite done with you yet. Not until yesterday did I know that you were a free man. I am here for more than the package—my dear wife's last gift to me. I am here for vengeance!"

A little cry burst from the throats of the Neffs as the speaker threw himself upon Aaron Knodle and bore him against the wall.

"No, I am not a man of blood," they heard the assailant say. "I am going to leave you, after all, to the vengeance of Heaven. I would not stain the floor of these old people with your blood. I've got my property and you can go."

The staggering body of a white-faced man went toward the door. It was Aaron Knodle. In another moment he was out in the street.

"Here," said the remaining man, as he picked up the watch, "this for your stewardship," and several gold coins fell upon old Jacob's counter. "I am no seeker of publicity. You have kept the package so well, now please keep my coming here a secret."

"But what shall we call you?" ventured Barbara Neff.

A little smile appeared at the corners of the man's mouth.

"You may call me David Jayne. Good night and good luck to both of you."

And with this he passed from the little store and when Jacob Neff recovered his scattered senses, he turned to Barbara and said:

"We'll respect his wish, Barbara. The world need never hear of this."

It has never heard of it till now.



THE BALLAD OF NANCY CROUSE.

(The incident upon which this poem is founded is a true one and the event took place in Middletown, during Lee's invasion in September, 1862.)

You've heard the story of Nancy Crouse,
The Valley Maid, who stood one day
Beneath the porch of her humble house,
And boldly defied the men in gray;
Over Catoctin's lengthening ridge,
Out from many a bosky glen,
Down the pike and over the bridge,
Booted and spurred, rode Stonewall's men.

Under the spires of Middletown,
Glinted many a rebel gun;
The dear old flag, they said, must down,
Nor flaunt its folds in Autumn's sun;
Mighty legions, clad in gray,
Cursed the banner of the stars,
And o'er the hills and far away,
Streamed the standards of the bars.

Nancy Crouse looked out and saw
The old flag floating on the breeze,
Emblem fair of truth and law;
Then as suddenly, she sees
Foam-flecked steed and rider stern
Who the standard has espied;
With an oath his hot lips burn,
For the flag he turns aside.

From the house the maiden springs
Grips the flag and round her form
Wraps it, while the cool air rings
With the portent of the storm;
With an oath the wretch in gray
Tries away the flag to tear,
Whilst the girl's eyes seem to say;
Bold, defiant: "If you dare!"

Closer to her form she clasps
The beauteous flag our fathers gave,
And the rebel's oaths and gasps
Threaten her with early grave;
"Not for you!" her words rang true,
"Not for you this banner fair,
You wear gray, its friends wear blue;
It was blessed with many a pray'r."

With a final curse and threat,
Rides the rebel far away.
And the flag once more is set
O'er the porch to taunt the Gray;
Smiling, Nancy sees the horde
Vanish down the village street;
Gleaming gun and swirling sword,
Once more in the distance meet.

Honor to the Maryland maid,
Who the banner saved that day
When thro' Autumn sun and shade
Marched the legions of the Gray;
Middletown remembers yet
How the tide of war was stay'd,
And the years will not forget
Nancy Crouse, the Valley Maid.

Gone are Stonewall's legions true,
Battle drums have ceased to beat,
And the Banners of the Blue
Wave not in the village street;
But the years on Nancy brave,
Will of praise bestow the meed;
Time for her will honor crave,
And the world will hail her deed!



WITCH MARGERY.

A SOUTHERN MOUNTAIN STORY.

YEAR the end of what had been a delightful autumn day, a few years before the outbreak of the war, two young men who had a short time before quitted Middletown, were ascending the slope of South Mountain. They were well dressed and as well mounted, and one would have thought from their chatty conversation that they had long been friends, which was not the case.

In fact, they had met for the first time that day, and in Frederick. One of the pair was Rosson Wilmot, who lived on "the Manor," beyond the crest of the mountain, and his companion was Eldon George, from Philadelphia. The latter had but lately reached Frederick, where, at the Park Hotel, he had fallen in with Wilmot, to whom he happened to apply for information concerning a certain part of the "old South."

As Wilmot was about to set out for "the Manor," George concluded to accompany him, and the couple had had a pleasant ride across the country. Wilmot had refrained from questioning his friend concerning his errand to that part of the country and during the jaunt George had given out but little information.

At last, however, while they were climbing the winding slope of the famous ridge the young Philadelphian said, jovially: "You wouldn't think, Wilmot, that I left Philadelphia with sealed orders?"

Wilmot returned a look of surprise.

"It's the last thing I would have thought of," he said.

"Nevertheless it's true. I opened the sealed packet as I was commanded to do, at Frederick. It was entrusted to my care by my grandfather, General Sephas George, of whom you may have heard, and who now is past ninety. Besides the letter of instructions the packet contained a smaller one, also carefully sealed, which I am to deliver to a resident of the mountain named Margery—"

Wilmot broke the speaker's sentence with a startling exclamation which seemed to whiten his face.

"What! Witch Margery?" he exclaimed. "I say, George, have you any conception of the character of the person to whose mountain shack you are going?"

"I know nothing about her, and my grandparent, if he knows, prefers to keep his own secrets. Witch, you say? Well, the old mountain looks as though it could harbor all the witch hags in creation."

Instead of smiling at this observation, Wilmot's face retained its seriousness.

"I was born in this mountain region," said he, "and *I don't* think I've got a drop of coward blood in my *veins*, but I'd sooner meet Satan, horns and all, than

have a bout with Witch Margery."

"Then I'm in for it, I guess," smiled young George. "I am my grandparent's only heir and it would be very unbecoming in me to cut dirt and throw up the job at this stage of the game. But what sort of a bedlam am I about to encounter?"

"A tigress, a rattlesnake, and a witch hag all rolled into one," answered Wilmot. "She is the witch queen of South Mountain, and, if all reports are true, she can raise the devil and the dead at will."

"Then I may have an opportunity to witness some of her magic," and the young Philadelphian laughed. "Where do I turn off the main road?"

"Right where we are now," and Wilmot reined in his horse. "You take that road and follow it to a splintered oak, the lightning's victim, where a mountain way leads upward. By following it you will soon reach a crazy shack backed by a great rock. That shack is the abode of Witch Margery. Well, good bye, I wish you success, but don't let the old she-cat come any of her hocus-pocus over you."

"I'll see that she doesn't," responded young George, and after clasping hands in a parting salute the young men separated.

"Not a very good certificate of character," thought the young easterner, as he rode off, the great dun slopes of the mountain at his right. "From my friend's description Witch Margery may have stirred the cauldron in Macbeth. But I'll see for myself pretty soon, and maybe there's a little adventure ahead."

The sun had some time before dropped behind the uneven crest of the ridge, so that the mountain roads were cast in shadows which deepened gloomily as George proceeded.

Looking carefully about him as he rode along, he at

last found the designated tree and the by-road leading from it up the mountain. At the end of another half hour he found himself amid the suddenly swooping darkness of the old South Mountain and mechanically drew rein.

"This is a witch region, sure enough," said he audibly. "I'd like to know what business the old General has with the spook hag that he should send me on a mission of this sort. I wonder if he ever knew her. Pshaw! General George acquainted with a creature answering to Wilmot's description! It's impossible. But here I am and the mysterious packet is still in my keeping."

A few rods further on and Eldon George thought he made out the indistinct outlines of a hut on the mountain. From what he could make out a huge boulder reared its head above the shack, while in a tree that overtopped the scene an owl was filling the locality with its dismal hooting.

"I suppose this is the place," said George, urging his shy animal forward. "Now, if I could met this witch hag, I——"

The owl, with a last discordant hoot, flew flapping through the pines and the next moment young George recoiled in his saddle.

"And who are you?" screeched a voice from the ground. "From what part of the fiery pit have you come with your prying and hardihood?"

George leaned forward. Surely he had encountered the witch of South Mountain.

"I have come to see you, if you are Margery," he said.

"I'm nobody else, though the mountain scum say I can turn myself into all manner of creatures. You've come to see me, eh? Well, that's clever; come along, then."

Witch Margery turned and led the way to the house, at the low-browed door of which Eldon George dis-



THE TREE UNDER WHICH GENERAL RENO DIED

1928.12.12

mounted. He tethered his horse to a sapling and followed the woman into the house.

In a few minutes a sputtering candle was dissipating some of the gloom of the miserable abode and George saw before him a woman who might have passed the century mark, a creature bent, wrinkled and white-headed. But her eyes glittered like sparks thrown from a blacksmith's anvil and what rendered her home hideous in appearance was the huge black cat that had perched himself on one of her shoulders.

"So you've come to see me," grinned the hag as she held the grimy candle close to George's face. "You look like—ah, God! I would know his face if I saw it among ten thousand. You've got his blood in your veins, I say. You were all spawned alike, ha! ha! You're all of the same satanic brood."

Young George was bewildered by this outburst of rage and he involuntarily shrank from the devilish face thrust almost against his own. Then he bethought himself of the packet he still carried near his heart.

"I have been commissioned to deliver this," he said, taking the packet from his bosom. "I dare say it will explain itself."

"Ah! that it will," screamed Witch Margery, as she snatched the packet from George's hand.

"And what is 'it that the devil's brood has sent me? A wedding ring, think you, my precious fool?"

The young Philadelphian shook his head. Witch Margery set the candle down on the leafless table at her side and fingered with the fastenings of the packet. The young man studied her while she worked.

Suddenly a cry that seemed to waken the weird echoes of the mountain pealed from the old hag's throat and she fell back, her weazened face illumined with a flash of rage, as she held up to the wondering eyes of Eldon George a plain gold ring.

"It's the same!" she screeched, as her single auditor shuddered, not at the peal of thunder which at that moment broke over the cabin, but at the distorted features revealed by the spooky candle. "Seventy-five years ago he gave me this and then took it away! Just think of it! Almost a century waiting for him or for some of his accursed spawn, and you have come. You have his face. Is he still this side the grave? Does Sephas George still wait for the vengeance of his God? Tell me, where is this man? And he sent the engagement ring back by you, his son?"

"No, I am the grandson of General George——"

"It's just as good," interrupted the mountain witch. "All's fish that comes to my net. I knew his blood tide would turn in this direction. I have waited for the hour of retribution. It has come, and you have his face—his demon face—with which I fell in love nearly a hundred years ago. I thank the fates that you have come—you, you a man with his blood in your veins."

George would have retreated through the door of the mountain shack if he had not known that it was shut. In another instant, and before he could lift a hand in self-defense, the talon-like fingers of the witch were at his throat and he was pressed against the wall with her tiger eyes blazing in his face. "You have come! Fate has sent you to me at last. And this, this, for the past!" and George felt his eyes start from his head as the mountain witch's fingers seemed to meet in his throat.

The storm at this moment broke in all its fury about the old hut on the mountain. Great bolts of lightning flared crazily in the sky and the rain pelted down, a veritable deluge to add to the terror of the scene.

* * * * *

The next morning as the sun penetrated the dark crevasses of the old South Mountain, a heap of ruins

marked the spot where for years had stood the shack of Witch Margery; the mountain streams were still torrents and lightning-riven trees stood or lay everywhere.

A horse lay dead in the vicinity of the mountain hut, and a hideous-looking cat sat amid the heap of ruins and scowled. The storm had tumbled great rocks from the upper slopes of the mountain and many of these formed a gigantic pile near the cabin.

No one ever looked to see what might be under this mountain sepulchre, but one day, a few years later, during the battle of South Mountain, a Union soldier stooped and picked up a plain gold engagement ring, and while he gazed at the bauble whose date went back almost a century, he could not read the story we have tried to tell, nor imagine the wild ending of two lives in the cabin of Witch Margery.



THE BELLS OF MIDDLETOWN.

Let me, a rhymster, weave a crown
For thee, O bells of Middletown,
That ring above the sod and snows
Where merrily Catoctin flows,
Towards the river dashing far
Beneath the beams of Maryland's star,
Bearing out to seas of sun
The consciousness of deeds well done.

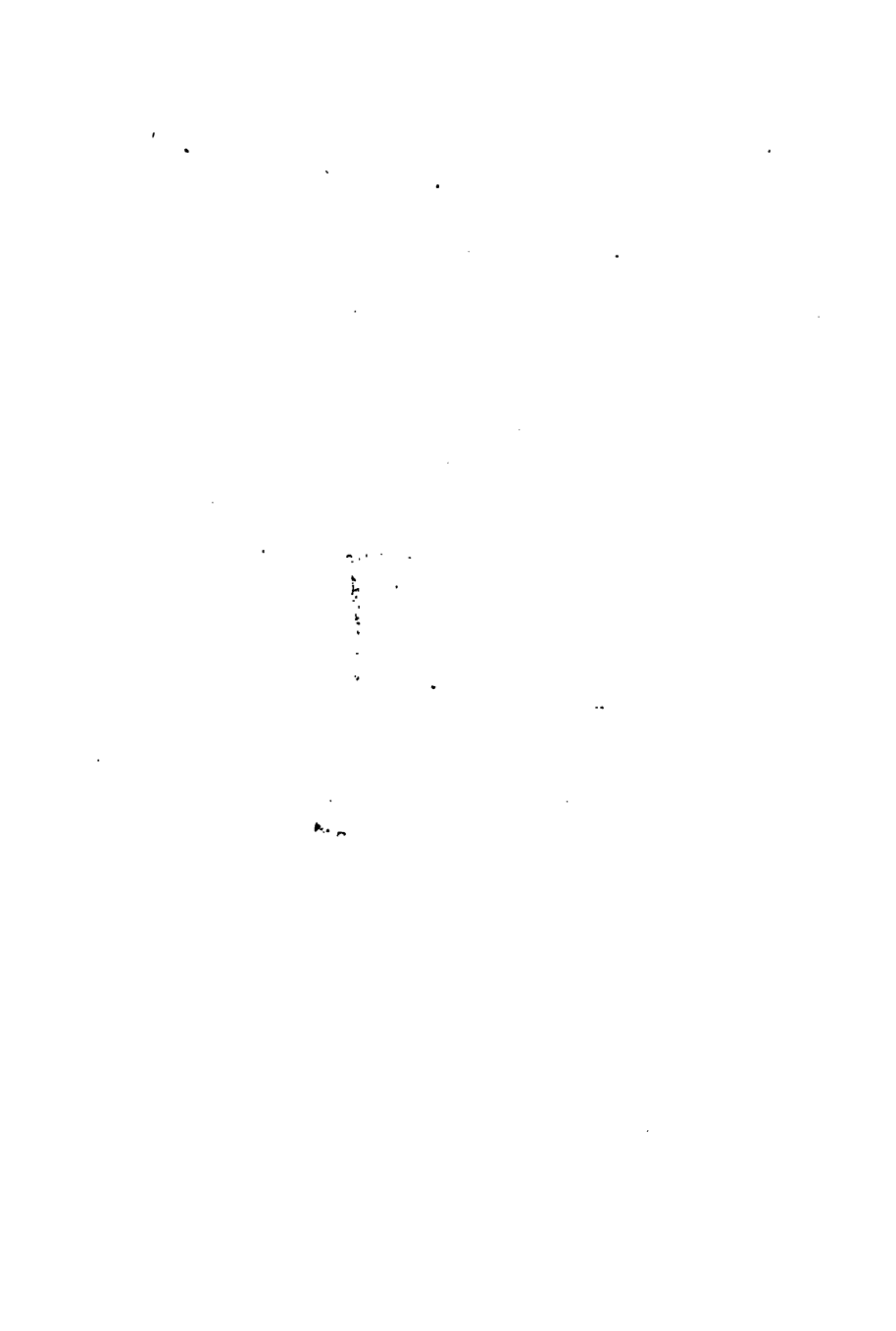
How often doth each holy chime
Breathe calm and peace at eventime,
When out upon the scented air
They call the worshipers to pray'r;
How often, too, the sacred knell
Proclaims some passing soul's farewell,
And says in notes that e'er abide:
"There shall be light at eventide."

I heard thee in the long ago,
O, bells that ring so soft and low—
When childhood was a golden dream
And youth with joys was all a gleam;
Upon my mother's ears there fell
The cadence of thy holy swell,
And friends who rest beneath the sod
Heard in thy tones the voice of God.

The mountain walls in blue and brown
Hark to the bells of Middletown,
And far and wide their notes of peace
Bid suffering and sorrow cease,
As did the voice of One who trod
With patience once Judea's sod,
And healed beside the sacred sea,
Kissed by the winds of Galilee.

How lovingly thy music swells
O, matchless, tuneful Valley bells!
Fair Maryland's children far away
Doth hear thee in their hearts today;
Aye, over mountain, stream and vale,
O'er torrent wild and shaded dale,
'Neath hoary peaks in robes of brown
They hear the bells of Middletown.

Ring out, O bells that breathe of love,
Blessed by the One that reigns above!
Forever bid our sorrows cease
And fill our hearts with heaven's peace;
To young and old, to rich and poor
Proclaim the Father's open door;
And though I am afar from thee,
O, bells of beauty, ring for me!





**COL. LAWRENCE EVERHART, REVOLUTIONARY HERO.
BURIED AT MIDDLETOWN.**

SERGEANT EVERHART'S CHRISTMAS EVE.

IT WAS Christmas Eve, 1839, and Sergeant Lawrence Everhart, the aged Revolutionary hero, sat by his roaring fire in his home southwest of Middletown, at what is now known as Phleeger's Mill.

The old man was quite alone. Without the heavy snow was piled against the house and a cold wind roared through the bare branches of the trees. Faintly to his ears had come the echoes of the big horn from the distant town, blown by Sexton Vanandah, for a meeting was in progress in the little brick church on the north common. It was a union service and the people of the surrounding country had come to worship the night before Christmas.

Sergeant Everhart, owing to increasing infirmities, had been prevented from attending and he was thinking of by-gone days when, as a young man, he had battled for Freedom. If he could have looked across the snow-covered landscape his blood would have tingled in his veins.

There sat in the back part of the church a man whose years were many and whose hair was gray. He was closely regarded by three men younger than himself, who now and then looked at one another as they momentarily turned their attention from the old man.

At last the aged worshipper rose and stole silently from the house of worship.

"I wonder if I will find him at home?" he asked himself. "I hoped to find him in the church, but he is not here."

A horse was tied to a rack near by and the speaker

threw himself into the saddle. As he did so a man came up and spoke to him. It was Doctor Thomas Springer, one of the old-time physicians of Middletown.

"Is that you, Hawkins?" asked the doctor, as he caught sight of the man's face.

"Yes, doctor."

"Which way? You are far from home on such a night as this and unless——"

"I've been far from home before," was the cheery interruption, and with this the rider bade Dr. Springer good night and rode away.

The horse cut down the street of Middletown and his rider bent his head to the wintry blast.

"Maybe it will be the last chance I'll have to see my old comrade," said the stranger. "We fought together at the Cowpens and in many another battle, and he was the best of comrades, too."

Soon after the speaker had left the meeting, the three men who had been watching him also stole out and found steeds near by.

"That's the man," said one. "He's got a good lot on his person and it's in coin—good, hard coin at that."

"Right you are, Dickson. We'll overtake him out of town and no one will be the wiser for it."

At this they galloped away, looking down the road for the man who was ahead.

"How did you like the sermon?" asked another of the trio.

"It was a good one as far as I heard. I was watching old Hawkins too intently to take much notice of it."

"Well, Wachter is a good preacher, but Bucher is just as good to my liking, but, to tell the truth, I'm no judge of preaching," at which all laughed together.

Meanwhile Hawkins, as he was called, was riding pretty fast to get to his journey's end before he was frozen. He did not see those who were on his track,

and even if he had looked back he could not have seen them for the darkness of the night.

His horse, however, had heard the followers for he had pricked up his ears and quickened his pace.

A mile out of town the three fellows had come almost up to their intended victim.

"You've got to be careful," said one. "He's an old soldier and as wiry as a cat."

"Leave that to me if I get my arm around him," was the reply. "No man ever got away from Tom Harris."

Another half mile was trotted off, when one of the party exclaimed:

"Hang me, if I don't believe he's he ; for Everhart's!"

"Looks that way, doesn't it?"

"Yes, and if he reaches the old man's house he's out of our clutches."

"Come along, then. We can afford to take no chances."

By this time the single rider, noticing the actions of his horse, had turned and made out the indistinct figures behind him. In a moment he clapped one hand to his breast as if to make sure that what he carried there was still safe.

Not far away, with a ruddy light in the main windows, stood the Everhart home.

"Divide now, and get on both sides of him," whispered one of the trio.

This was done, one taking to the right, the other to the left, while the third rode straight ahead with his eyes on the alert.

Suddenly the man Hawkins put spurs to his horse and dashed on faster than ever. He had scented the danger that menaced him and seemed to divine the intentions of his pursuers.

It was now a race down the road.

Hawkins bestrode a good horse, but his pursuers were also well mounted and the powdery snow flew back from beneath their horses' hoofs.

All at once one of the three rode alongside of Hawkins and reached out a quick and heavy hand for him. Hawkins avoided the hand by a dextrous twist of his body and the fellow almost fell from his saddle.

"Halt there, you old rascal!" shouted one of the others. "We have a little pressing business with you."

There was no reply to these words for Hawkins, now thoroughly frightened, thought only of getting away from his enemies.

All his Revolutionary blood boiled in his veins. He thought of the time when he had outstripped the British dragoons and how he and Everhart had done this same trick together.

Nearer and nearer they came to the house of the old soldier.

The men now no longer disguised their purpose.

"Don't let him get away!" almost yelled the leader of the three. "If we do, we'll never get another chance at the spoil."

They began to close about Hawkins like a lot of forest wolves.

He shook them off with his old time vigor, but this only spurred them to fury and the battle raged.

Once Hawkins broke loose from them, but they seized him again and with curses and epithets tried to unhorse him in the snow.

Once he almost touched the ground, but he was up in a jiffy fighting for his life.

If he could only reach the house! He knew that safety was beyond the door, but could he reach it?

All at once Sergeant Everhart seemed to rouse as if from a dream of the past. Something outside had startled him and he shook off the lethargy of sleep, and

started to his feet. All the fire of his youth suddenly blazed up in his eyes.

"What's that out there? Some revelers?" he questioned himself. "It is unseemly conduct for Christmas Eve."

With this he hastened across the room and opened the door. A flood of warm light fell upon the snow.

He saw dimly at first several figures apparently battling in the snowy road. What did it mean? The cold wind cut his well-chiseled face and he leaned forward as he went out into the yard and for a moment took in the battle.

"Don't fear old Everhart," he heard a voice say. "We're a match for him, too. Take old Hawkins even if he gets inside."

Just at this moment, Hawkins, by a powerful effort, wrenched himself loose from his determined antagonists and raced for the house.

"Quick, Dickson! He'll get away yet," was the shout that cut the wintry night.

A last wild dash forward was made by the highway-men.

The foremost one seized Hawkins and pulled him back. In another moment he was on the ground.

"It's underneath his waistcoat on the left side!" cried the leader. "You've got a knife, Harris."

At that instant another figure was in the fight. The hero of the Cowpens rushed forward. He was for the moment like a tiger unchained.

"Hold the money carrier," said one of the three. "The old soldier I'll attend to myself."

The following second a man measured his length in the snow, sent sprawling by a stroke from Everhart's clenched hand.

"By Jove! he kicks like a bull," growled the stricken man as he picked himself up.

Another dashed for Sergeant Everhart, only to receive the same treatment his comrade had received, but the third was trying to rip open Hawkins' waistcoat with a huge pocket knife.

In the extremity of the moment Hawkins called loudly for help.

At this Everhart threw himself forward and with the agility of a gladiator, jerked his comrade from the very clutches of the foe. Hawkins had fainted. With a heavy burden on his arm the hero of the Revolution fought them off. He threw one this way, the other that, and the third gave up the contest.

Then, with a superhuman effort, Everhart dragged the unconscious man inside and slammed the heavy door in the faces of the discomfited trio.

A bolt was shot into its place and Sergeant Everhart placed his unexpected guest in an armchair.

"Well!" he murmured, as he stepped back and took a good look at the white face framed with almost snow-white hair. "It's Corporal Hawkins of the old line, or I'm not Lawrence Everhart!"

Restoratives were soon found and Hawkins came out of his lethargy while the hand of the old sergeant smoothed his straggling locks.

"Lawrence!" breathed Hawkins as he looked up."

"Abner!" was the reply.

"This is the second time, Lawrence——"

"Yes, I remember. I saved you once at the Cowpens."

"And I gave you a friendly lift when that big British dragoon was about to split your head."

Crestfallen, the three rascals had slunk away, going back toward Middletown. If they had peeped in at the window they would have seen a beautiful tableau, the two old comrades in each other's arms. It was the *fairest* picture any Christmas Eve had ever seen and the *soft firelight* fell over it all.

It was Sergeant Everhart's last Christmas Eve, but as long as he lived Abner Hawkins never forgot it and no sweeter tears than his fell upon Everhart's grave in the little "God's acre" at Middletown.



CHRISTMAS ON SOUTH MOUNTAIN.

The snow late white on the mountain and down in the
gorges deep
Where the ghosts and the witches dally, the cold winds
were asleep;
The stars were aglow in the heavens, the great drifts,
lifted high,
Seemed in the dim and eelrie light to touch the winter
sky.

A little girl in a cabin lone looked out upon the sight
And murmured with a childish sigh: "Will Santa come
tonight?
How can he find me, all shut in? I fear he'll never
come
But will leave his gifts in other spots. How will he find
our home?"

She turned away from the window, this sad-faced moun-
tain child,
And shuddered by a frugal fire housed from the night
so wild;
"He cannot find us, mamma, the snow will keep him
back,
And well I know his faithful deer will surely lose the
track."

Afar the lights of Middletown glowed like a troop of
stars,
The ridges white that lay between looked like a line of
bars,
And as the cold night deepened the poor child's sadness
grew
And in her heart for Santa Claus her wish she did
renew.

Her dreams were dreams of pretty gifts, she conned them
o'er and o'er;
It seemed to her they covered all the space upon the
floor,
And in her sleep she clapped her hands with very childish
glee
And cried: "How did good Santa ever find a tot
like me?"

With jingling bells the reindeer sleigh dashed down
the mountain grim,
And Santa Claus was driving with his old time Christmas
vim;
His sturdy deer kept in the road despite the heavy snow,
And loudly cracked his merry whip that all the folk
might know.

He saw a light that twinkled in the area of white—
"Ho! what is this? a cabin?" and he journeyed to the
right,
Sprang to the ground, got down his pack and crossed the
threshold bare,
Nor heeded for a moment then the cold and frosty air.

"A mountain kid? Well, I declare!" He gazed upon the
child,
Who in her Christmas vision like a cherub sweetly
smiled,
And then he scattered o'er her bed the choicest gifts he
bore
And said with eyes that twinkled: "I would like to
give her more."

The morning came, two little eyes peeped o'er the scanty bed,
A joyful cry, a child's delight. "He surely came," she said;
"I wonder how he found the way through all the mountain snow;
Some angel from the far-off land has guided him, I know."

And this is how one Christmas came to old South Mountain's crest,
And Santa Claus smiled softly in his far-off northern nest,
"'Twould ne'er have done,' cried he, 'to miss that little mountain tot,
And now she knows that not a child by Santa is forgot.'"



THE MYSTERIOUS GUESTS.

A TALE OF HAGAN'S TAVERN.

THE last terrible clap of thunder from the storm that hovered over the mountain seemed to shake Hagan's tavern to its foundation. The heavy clouds hung poised over Braddock crest and the vivid lightning showed the spires of Middletown and revealed the entire valley to the foot of South Mountain. There had not been such a storm in years, and the most fearless almost cringed in their homes while it held sway without.

Already the creeks had become torrents and the fields were little lakes, the pike, where it was level, seemed a sheet of water and the landlord who listened to the pelting rain hoped that no one was abroad at such an hour. It was in the early '30's and the tavern was a noted place for the accommodation of man and beast. It had housed some distinguished guests in its time and mine host M—— was celebrated for his hospitality.

In the midst of the storm which I have imperfectly described, there came a sudden knock at the door. It sounded like the butt of a heavy whip and M——, with an exclamation of surprise, sprang to the door. To his astonishment he beheld a middle-aged man drenched to the skin, holding a young woman in his arms. She was limp and lifeless, and her chestnut hair was well soaked with water.

The stranger did not ask any questions, but pushed inside, turning upon the mountain landlord when the door had been closed.

"We want shelter for the night," said he. "It's pretty bad outside, but if the lightning had not killed our horses we might have made the town over in the valley.

M—— could only stare at the couple, but his wife came forward and with womanly tenderness essayed to care for the young woman.

The man seemed to have but little concern for himself. He wore the look of a gentleman, but the cast of his features was slightly foreign.

"You are cold," said M——, "and drenched to the skin. You say the bolt killed your horses?"

"Yes, and stunned the lady yonder. She'll come round all right. Yes, I'll take a warmer, if you please."

He drank his toddy with eagerness, smacking his lips after the last drop, watched all the time by the landlord. The young woman, who might have been a little *past* twenty, came out of her swoon under the ministra-

tions of the landlord's wife and appeared contented. The man said she was his niece, and that they were going to Hagerstown, but beyond this he was as silent as a clam.

The next day the couple were still M——'s guests. The horses had been cut from the harness and buried, and Mr. Jenifer, as the stranger called himself, began to take long walks on the mountain. The girl now and then accompanied him and the landlord at times overheard them conversing in a foreign tongue. Mrs. M—— confided to her husband that the young woman had a good many fine jewels and the black ebony box which had been taken from the vehicle was very heavy and was supposed to contain gold.

One day M——, in coming along a wooded path some distance from the turnpike, saw his male guest measuring off some ground, starting from the foot of a great oak which had been a landmark for years. He secreted himself behind another tree and watched the man with eager curiosity. By and by Mr. Jenifer seemed satisfied with his measurements, for he planted a stick at a certain place and returned to the tavern.

That night he announced to M—— that he and Adele would proceed on their journey the following day, as he had hired a vehicle from a nearby farmer. He paid his score in advance and presented Mrs. M—— with a ring containing an opal set.

The next day the girl was too unwell to proceed, but the day following they started off. M—— helped them into the vehicle and when they were gone he remembered that they had not taken with them the ebony box. The tavern was forthwith searched for it, but it was not found.

"It's deuced strange," remarked the landlord to his better half. "They fetched the box with them and did not take it away. It was heavy, too, and that's what

made me notice it. It beats my time all holler."

Several months passed and the mysterious guests of the mountain hostelry were almost forgotten; in fact, M—— very rarely referred to the ebony box, but that it was not entirely out of his mind was apparent by his frequenting the locality where he had seen the stranger measuring the ground. The spot seemed to have a fascination for the landlord.

"If he buried the box hereabouts he will come back for it some time," he said. "He may not have been entirely straight, and as he was a foreigner, he may have committed some crime for which he was compelled to fly the country.

At last two years crept away. One night the host of the mountain tavern saw at his door a face that drew from him an exclamation of astonishment. It resembled —yet was unlike the owner of the ebony box. It was a face that had aged, the face of a hunted man, with great, deep, sunken eyes and prominent cheek bones.

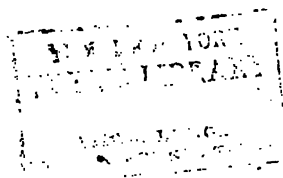
The landlord held the door open for him and he tottered into the well-lighted room. He looked around as though he expected to see some enemies at his heels, and the drink the landlord proffered was downed with the gusto of a wild man. The man was exhausted; he must have crossed the mountain afoot for not a sign of a vehicle was visible and his garments showed that he had passed more than one night on the wooded ridge.

He was given his old room in the tavern and the landlord and his wife retired. For some time they laid awake discussing Mr. Jenifer's return and wondering what had become of Adele. As Jenifer had not referred to her, they supposed that he had left her somewhere on the other side of the mountain.

Suddenly the landlord became aware of a slight noise in the room that held his guest. Slipping from bed he *listened and distinctly* heard the window raised. By and



HAGAN'S TAVERN.
ONE OF THE OLDEST TAVERNS IN THE VALLEY.



by he lifted the latch of the chamber door. Mr. Jenifer was gone!

M—— went back, slid into his garments and slipped from the house. A full moon hung in the sky and by its light he detected a flitting figure, but did not seek to overtake it. He had the instincts of a good trapper, used as he had been to the mountain all his life, and when he saw the man moving toward the old oak he thought at once of the ebony box.

"Hang me," muttered mine host, "if he hasn't come back after the treasure. He's left the young woman somewhere and has made the journey all alone. Ten chances to one that the box belongs to her, or was stolen in some country across the water."

At any rate the mountain boniface was convinced that foul play had entered into the disappearance of the black box and he resolved to see the adventure through to the end. Nothing but his keenness of vision, aided by the patchwork of moonlight, enabled him to keep track of Jenifer. The strange man seemed to have something important in view and he led M—— a long chase until they were half way up the slope of Braddock.

Then he paused and looked cautiously around. He took from his pocket a bit of paper and studied it closely in the moonlight. The next moment he stepped measuredly toward the south, slowly, as if counting his strides, and at last brought up beside the big oak. By this time the eyes of the mountain landlord were bulging from his head and the excitement of the moment stilled as it were his pulsing heart.

At that instant there came over the sleeping valley an ominous rumble, presage of a coming storm. A bolt of lightning out of the clouds that had gathered over old Braddock and started zig-zag through the timber.

The landlord of the inn started to his feet. Then came

another clap of thunder and then the whole wood seemed on fire.

The old oak which stood not twenty yards away, had been rent atwain by the destructive bolt, and one of the flying fragments sent mine host backward against another tree.

When he recovered he went forward with considerable ease for the storm had drifted away as suddenly as it had appeared. The moon was out again and nothing was to be seen of the lightning's work but the riven oak.

Nothing? M—— came to a sudden halt for at his feet lay the body of Mr. Jenifer. The landlord gazed at it a moment, then stooped and saw that life still remained. His late guest had been felled by a limb from the tree.

"Oh, it's you?" said Jenifer, looking up into M——'s face. "I thought you were the hunters."

"The hunters?" echoed the mystified landlord.

"Aye, the trail dogs from France. They want the jewels of the Grand Duchess. Ha! it was a slick trick we played on her ladyship, Adele and I."

The innkeeper broke in with an exclamation. It was the first time Jenifer had mentioned the name of his female companion.

"Where is Adele?" queried M——.

"Oh, she died a year ago. She was my niece good enough and in the employ of her grace, the Grand Duchess Chlotilde. It was a plot of mine that we rob her grace of her jewels and come to America, which we did. And such jewels! They are worth a king's ransom. We heard in your city of Baltimore that the hounds of the Grand Duchess were on our trail, so we broke for the interior, for the mountains. I've come back for the jewels"——

"In the black box?"

"Yes, in the ebony box. I planted them on the moun-

tain here and made a chart of the place—a chart which is Greek to everybody but myself.”

“And you have found the box?”

“No. The storm prevented. I will never find it because I am dying.”

“But the chart—the location?” exclaimed the landlord of the mountain inn.

“Not for you—not for any living soul, seeing that I cannot find the box myself,” answered the prostrate man through clenched teeth.

“You miserable wretch!” almost yelled the landlord.

“Are you going to let the secret die with you?”

“Why not? What right have you to the jewels of the Grand Duchess? I have chewed up the little chart. The secret is mine and never will be solved.”

M—— was in a fury of passion. He could have struck dead the man at his feet, but there was no necessity for such action, for five minutes later he stood over a corpse.

The morning came. The body of the so-called Jenifer was quietly buried and the landlord of the mountain inn began a search for the ebony box which lasted for years. As long as he inhabited the old inn, known in after days as Hagan’s, he prosecuted the search. The wood never gave up its treasure, and somewhere on Braddock are buried to this day the jewels of the Grand Duchess.



A DREAM OF THE DAISES.

I dream of the daisies that blossom and blow
Where the waters of Maryland sparkle and flow—
Where the mocking bird chants in the gloaming her lay
And the bee in the morning is up and away;
Where down from the soft, bending arches of June
The sky-lark sends earthward her ravishing tune,
And on the warm air is the glint of a wing,
And the oriole carols beside the old spring.

I dream of the daisies in vestments of white
Where Frederick's steeples stand out in the night,
And Middletown's meads are as soft as a lawn
Dew-sprinkled and fair as the roseate dawn;
Where e'en on the slopes of South Mountain so green
The petals of white in their beauty are seen,
The heart of the daisy in richness untold
Appears to the eyes as a heart of pure gold.

I dream of the daisies that bloom on the lee
Where pretty Catoctin flows down to the sea,
Where the laughter of childhood is heard every hour,
And trembles the stalk of the delicate flower;
It blooms on the hillock, it hedges the road
Where the bell-adorned teams struggle on with the load.
And Braddock in beauty lifts high his fair crown
O'er topping the woodland, the valley and town.

I dream of the daisy that welcomes the morn
With a smile that the face of a queen would adorn;
In Maryland's sunlight and Maryland's shade.
It nods in the breezes in every glade;
Methinks that the hands of the angels have set
The beautiful daisies no heart can forget,
And I sigh as the dreams of my slumbers unfold
For a glimpse of the blossoms in samite and gold.

\$ 5,000 REWARD.

A STORY OF THE OLD ELM.

OF THE many thousands who read the following advertisement, which appeared in the Baltimore newspapers for almost a week in the summer of 1860, not one associated with it the famous old elm, which once stood near the culvert that spans the rill just west of Middletown.

\$5000 REWARD—The foregoing sum will be paid to the person who restores to its owner the box of jewels taken from No. 810 C—— street in this city on the night of the 10th of May. No questions will be asked.—
“X Y Z.”

Simple and liberal as the notice was, there hangs to it a tale which long since passed from the lips of man. No. 810 C—— street, was the abode of wealth and fashion. It was inhabited by a family whom, for the purposes of my narrative, I will call Calvert. Indeed, I shall use fictitious names throughout, as relatives of the parties involved are undoubtedly living today.

The stolen jewels were heirlooms which had come down to the present Calverts through five generations and had a history not necessary to relate here. The theft was one of the coolest bits of criminology that ever bothered the Baltimore police. They were taken from the Calverts during a noted function given in honor of the youngest daughter's debut, in fact, the

crime was committed while the richly arrayed guests filled the well-appointed mansion and Miss Lois, the debutante, was the first to discover the loss.

Arrayed in the most fashionable of coming-out drapery the beautiful young girl went to the room where the jewels were kept for the purpose of adding them to her trousseau. Imagine her horror when she unlocked the handsome dresser to discover that the jewel box was missing. There was a wild shriek that rang throughout the house and Miss Lois was found in a dead faint on the floor. Consternation reigned in the Calvert home. It was before the days of the telephone, but the police were sent for as soon as possible. The mystery deepened from the start, the hunt was absolutely clewless. No one was suspected and two weeks after the strange crime the advertisement given above appeared in the newspapers.

Six weeks after the theft a youngish looking man entered Middletown from the East. His shoes showed that he had probably walked from Frederick; he was fairly well clad in what had once been a fashionable suit and his face showed that he had not seen a barber for a week. Evidently he had his bearings, for he headed for the main hotel and gulped down a glass of liquor at the bar with great gusto.

The dispenser of the ardent, eyed the stranger and tried to start a conversation. The day was warm and dry, but a cloud that hung over South Mountain promised a shower. In the midst of the landlord's remarks on the state of the weather the stranger asked the distance to Boonsboro.

"It's eight good miles if you're riding; ten if you walk," was the reply.

"Then it's ten," said the other with a smile. "Any rests between here and there?"

"Oh, yes; there's the Mountain House."

"Good beverages there, I suppose?"

"Fair to middlin', but if you're afoot you won't reach it till after dark."

"I'm in no hurry. By the way, landlord, you haven't an extra auger about the house?"

This question made mine host open his beady eyes.

"I don't know. How large a one would you like?"

"Say an inch."

"'Pears to me there is an inch auger about the premises," and after a brief hunt such an object was placed on the counter.

The stranger appeared satisfied. He laid a silver dollar on the counter with a questioning look at the proprietor of the hostelry, took another drink, hid the auger underneath his coat and went away.

"I wonder what he wanted with that auger?" mine host asked himself. "Is he a house-breaker? Looks a little too genteel for that. If I thought augers were going to be in demand, hang me if I wouldn't get a supply."

By this time the stranger was nearly out of town and the summer twilight was settling down over mountain and valley. He kept to the right of the pike as he went down the hill. When he caught sight of the old elm spreading its branches far and wide, his dark eyes seemed to glitter. He looked back cautiously. No one was in sight. When he reached the tree he halted and looked upward through its network of boughs.

Presently he found himself in the first great fork. He was as nimble as a cat. He ascended a little higher, found another fork, and, bracing himself firmly, proceeded to bore a hole downward in the fork itself. Whenever he heard the rumble of a vehicle or voices, he paused until they no longer saluted his ear. Then he

went at it again till the steel had sank at least eight inches into the wood.

Placing the auger where it would not fall, he drew from his bosom a carefully wrapped package which he opened to disclose a necklace of diamonds exquisitely arranged. Besides these there were other jewels of almost equal value and all of them he dexterously dropped into the hole in the fork. Having proceeded thus far he cut off a bough with his pocket knife and fashioned a plug which he drove into the hole by means of the auger handle. Then he descended and dropped lightly to the ground.

"Five thousand reward, eh?" he chuckled. "When 'X. Y. Z.' pays it over he'll be older than Methuseleh, or I'm a chicken. What a set of noodles those Baltimore police are, to be sure. The old elm will keep the secret, and it's a treasury no one will ever think of robbing. They're safer up there than they were in Jason Calvert's house, and Miss Lois, the pretty butterfly, won't wear the jewels at her wedding. Jack Gorham, the black sheep, knows a thing or two, and the old tree will share his secret till he comes back. It's not very far to the top of the mountain, and I might as well pull along. That Middletown whisky would kill at forty rods."

Briskly the man who called himself Jack Gorham went down the pike. A short distance beyond Koogle's bridge he espied a hollow tree and there he left the auger. It was night when he drank at the modest bar of the Mountain House and then he disappeared in the darkness.

It was two years afterward almost to the day, when a man driving a jaunty looking rig entered Middletown. Another man lounging on the hotel porch noticed the former as he drove up and gave utterance to a subdued *exclamation*.

"What streak of luck is this?" he exclaimed. "It's the only Jack Gorham and no mistake, but he's a bird in fine feathers. Must be playing spy on one side or the other, else what but spying would bring him here?"

Meantime Gorham had alighted and passed into the hotel, with a covert glance at the occupant of the porch. The porch sitter left his chair and went to his room. There he armed himself with a revolver and looked at a photograph which he took from his traveling bag.

"It's Gorham and no mistake," he said. "If I'm right in my surmises, I'm on the trail of the Calvert jewels, though that is not my present business in Middletown. It's one or two things now—the secret of the Calvert heirlooms or Gorham's life."

When the hotel's guest came back to the porch, lo! the man called Gorham was gone.

"As slippery as an eel," said the Government detective, as he looked up and down the street, and then he addressed a man who leaned against a nearby tree.

"Which way did the man in buggy go?" he queried.

"Toward the mountain yonder," was the reply.

The secret service officer went direct to the stable and saddled a horse without so much as "by your leave." He was cool and confident, sure that he was about to solve the mystery connected with the theft of the Calvert jewels. In less than five minutes he was riding down the street and the first long shadows of the summer gloaming kissed his face.

From the edge of town he cast an anxious look toward the mountain, ere long to tremble beneath the throes of battle. Nothing was in the road. Not much disappointed he hastened on and in a few minutes later came upon a horse and buggy under the old elm. The Government agent rode directly under the boughs and drew rein. A strange stillness pervaded everything.

"I'm not far from the quarry," thought the secret

service man. "Gorham's not far from his horse."

Just then in looking upward he discerned a dark object in the tree between him and the early stars. It was a man. Instantly the agent's hand sought his revolver.

"It's all up, Gorham," said he, as he drew the weapon. "You might as well bring them down with you."

The response was a half growl in the elm. The human figure stooped and glared at the man on horseback.

"Who are you?" came down through the leaves.

"Tom Whittredge, at your service, Jack. You know me. It was a slick trick, that one at the Calvert mansion——"

"And you're not going to turn it on me, I tell you!" exclaimed the man in the tree.

The next instant a tongue of fire spurted in the agent's face. Whittredge fell from his horse and groaned on the ground.

"Curse it all, the jig's up," said Jack Gorham. "I've lost the game in the elm."

He dropped to the ground, looked at the Government agent, sprang into his buggy and dashed away. Whittredge's skull had been fractured by the bullet, and he was found under the tree by a passerby. He was taken as soon as possible to Frederick, where he gradually recovered from his wound, but, strange to say, his memory was forever gone.

For five years more the old elm kept the secret of the Calvert jewels. Armies passed and repassed it without suspecting that it was a living treasure chest.

At last a man rode under it and vaulted among its branches. He bored assiduously into one of its forks and drew out gems that flashed and glistened. It was *Jack Gorham*, the once society man of Baltimore. When

the old elm was ruthlessly cut down some one observed the vacant hole in the fork and exclaimed:

"That must 'a' been a crazy woodpecker to make a hole like that!"

A few years ago a dying man, once the handsome Jack Gorham, whispered out the story of the Calvert jewels and how the old elm near Middletown had helped him keep the secret.



FROM BRADDOCK HEIGHTS.

I gaze afar from Braddock toward the glowing West,
Where with a matchless brush the sun paints old South
Mountain's crest,

'Neath beetling crag and dark ravine, 'neath bush and
hoary tree,

Thro' daisied meads and poppled fields Catoctin hunts
the sea;

I look across a valley entrancing in my eyes,
As lovely as the gardens fair of storied paradise—
Not lovelier than Canaan old which Moses saw afar
When he led God's chosen children under Orient sun
and star.

I see beneath my restless feet a highway leading down
To where arise with sacred pride the spires of Mid-
dletown.

Deep in the valley like a gem set in some crown of old,
And round it in their beauty lie the harvest fields of
gold;

The turnpike, winding in and out, now peeps, now dis-
appears

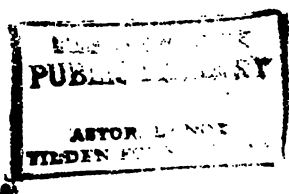
Until beyond the town it finds the mountain rich in
years—
Rich in years and old in story, burdened with its ghostly
lore,
Crowned with legends wild, pathetic that will live for-
evermore.

I see the gap among the hills, blue-circled, far away,
Where Harper's Ferry nestles 'neath its towering walls
of gray—
Where Shenandoah's crystal tides Potomac's ripples wed
And Maryland Heights in grandeur rise above the
nuptial bed;
I turn away a moment to a landscape lovelier still
Where bloom the fields that circle 'round historic Myers-
ville,
And far beyond the village fair the mountains lift again,
The blue peaks rising high above the rich and fruitful
plain.

There's Jefferson, and far away the Peaks of Otter show,
And in the East of storied fame the spires of Frederick
glow;
Among the trees, through fertile fields the white road
wanders down
Till lost among the happy homes of Barbara Freitchie's
town.
Methinks I hear the tuneful bells that chime above the
street,
To prayer the people calling in their accents low and
sweet,
And yonder old Monocacy, once crimson, seaward flows
Thro' haunt of duck and timid hare, thro' fields of rye
and rose.



BRADDOCK HEIGHTS AND MIDDLETOWN VALLEY.
Photo by Marken & Bielfeld, Frederick, Md.



O what a matchless landscape from old Braddock can
be seen!
The fields in summer's harvest garb, the woods in living
green,
The creeks like threads of silver winding thro' the val-
leys fair,
While scents of blom and garnered hay perfume the
ambient air;
Has not the hand of genil opened 'neath the vaulted
skies
For me the wondrous gates of gold that lead to Paradise?
The heart grows still a moment as I gaze from Brad-
dock's throne,
And then the soul with rapture cries: "'Tis Maryland,
my own!"



SILVER STAR.

A LEGEND OF LOVER'S LEAP.

THERE was a time, ages ago, when no white man's
foot had pressed the surface of Lover's Leap.
Then the Catoctin flowed through an unbroken
wildness to the sea, cleaving its way, as it were, through
the mountain chain and bearing on its bosom the lithe
canoes of the red men. Fair as the surrounding valley
is today, it must have been fairer then, for nature ruled
undisturbed and the stars shone upon a paradise in-
describably lovely. The trails of the Indian crossed and
recrossed along Catoctin. Here and there rose the
birchen wigwams of the vanished races and more than

one fierce encounter took place between the scarlet rivals.

Among the red chieftains who exerted a powerful sway in this region during the period mentioned above was Cotekon, or the Springing Panther, an Indian known far and wide for his ferocity and strength. He was in reality a red king whose word was absolute law. Cotekon had but one child, a daughter named Leonita, or Silver Star. Beautiful as a wild rose, perfect in figure and as agile as a gazelle, the maiden of sixteen was the acknowledged belle of the primeval forest and consequently numbered her lovers by the score. Already the young braves had fought for her smiles, but the girl had declared no open preference as to her persistent suitors.

At the close of a rare day in the fall of the year when every tree and bush in the valley of the Catoctin wore its garb of gold, a young warrior made his appearance on the slopes of the mountain spur known now as Braddock Heights. He had been successful in the chase for a young doe lay at his feet. All alone, he gazed pensively upon the scene stretched before his eager vision.

Suddenly raising his hand he pointed toward the great peak that was outlined in the west and exclaimed:

"This night will Oonomoo possess the flower of her people! The scowls of Cotekon have no fears for him—Silver Star shall build no fires but in Oonomoo's wigwam. Her feet shall run to meet no brave but him."

With this he stooped, and flinging the body of the doe over his shoulder, strode down the mountain and was lost to view among the ancient trees. Not long afterward the Indian reached a tribal village nestling near the base of South Mountain. Turning his game over to an Indian woman, he ran to the edge of the village where he suddenly came face to face with Leonita. The beautiful Indian girl would have eluded him, for she was

swift of foot, but an instant later she found herself in the redskin's grasp.

"Leonita," cried the ardent wooer, "must answer Oonomoo before yon star dips below the mountain."

"No, no," answer the girl in accents which trembled at first. "Cotekon has spoken and his child must wed one who is a chief."

At this the eyes of the red youth flashed.

"Oonomoo," cried he, "is as good as any one who wears the feathers of a chief. He will have Silver Star, or no red man shall ever call her his."

The Indian princess drew back to the full length of the human tether. Her courage was coming back.

"Oonomoo pleads in vain," she exclaimed. "Yon spark of the manitou's fire will set a thousand times and even then Silver Star will not be the bride of Oonomoo."

A cry of rage leaped from the Indian's lips. He drew the girl suddenly toward him and was about to press his lips to her forehead when a young warrior rushed forward and dealing Oonomoo a terrific blow in the face, broke his hold and liberated his prisoner. Then, seizing Silver Star by the wrist, he drew her from the spot and in a moment both were racing away, while Oonomoo vented his rage to the rocks and trees.

For some days thereafter the red rivals carefully avoided one another. Their quest for the girl's love was no secret among the tribe. Indeed, all expected that sometime it would result in a tragedy and Leonita's friends had cautioned her to give Oonomoo no cause for umbrage.

The fall was drawing to a close when it was known that before the first snowfall Cotekon's daughter would become the bride of Molaton. This announcement soon reached the ears of Oonomoo, conveyed thither, no doubt, by jealous enemies of Silver Star. The young Indian, in his rage, uttered all manner of maledictions and regis-

tered on high a vow that the happiness of the young pair should never be consummated.

Meanwhile the Indian princess seemed to grow more lovely than ever. Her songs reverberated more and more throughout the forest and she and Molaton more than once met at the famous old elm, which, until a few years ago, stood just west of Middletown.

To more than one of these meetings Oonomoo was a witness. On more than one occasion he had drawn the arrow of his buckhorn bow to the keen barb, but as often he stayed his hand and walked away. He discovered in course of time that Leonita and her accepted lover met at a certain spot where the rugged rocks rose high above the Catoctin and there he promised himself that he would put an end to his successful rival.

The time for the wedding drew on apace, and as the days waned Oonomoo's rage became more ungovernable.

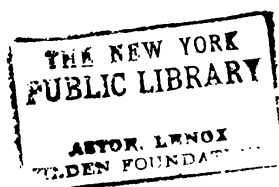
"The dog shall die!" he exclaimed more than once to himself. "He shall never win the fickle maiden who has promised her hand to Molatan first because he wears the eagle feathers of a chief. She has declared that the mountain star shall rise and set a thousand times ere she is the bride of Oonomoo. But we shall see!"

One night in the middle of November, when the Catoctin had become as clear as crystal, the wily Oonomoo trailed the lovers to the spot I have mentioned. The star shone with unwonted brilliancy above South Mountain and seemed by its own magnificent effulgence to light up the whole of the surrounding region. He watched the happy pair glide arm in arm through the tinted foliage, his own heart filled with the darkest designs. He carried his bow and arrow which he gripped with the hatred of a fiend and his feet sent forth no sound as they crinkled the autumn leaves.

Leonita and her betrothed went straight to the rocks. They halted on the very fringe of the precipice and gazed



LOVERS' LEAP, ON THE CATOCTIN.



down upon the starlit water as they communed with one another in low and endearing tones. Hidden by the dense bushes that grew behind the rocks on the gentle slope Oonomoo nursed his wrath, seeing nothing but the unsuspecting lovers before him.

He listened with bated breath to the renewals of love that fell from the lips of the pair. Nearer and nearer he crept with the stealthiness and ferocity of the panther until he stood within a few feet of the lovers.

All at once with a yell he announced his presence. Quick as a flash the disturbed lovers turned to find Oonomoo's arrow drawn to the barb while his savage eyes seemed to emit sparks of fire. The lovers stood speechless and at the mercy of the scarlet rival.

For a moment eye met eye, the stern silence broken only by the shriek of a night bird which, darting from her nest among the pines, whirled frightened down the stream.

"Let Silver Star leave the young coward and come to the arms of Oonomoo!" flashed the enraged savage.

"If she comes not, the arrows of Oonomoo will find the hearts of both."

Stung to resentment by these words Molaton attempted to disengage himself from Silver Star's embrace, but the Indian girl clung to him with the energy of despair.

"What shall Leonita's answer be?" hissed Oonomoo. "He cannot wait till the great star above the mountain sets and rises again."

There was no reply. Silver Star looked her enemy in the face and clung closer to her chosen love.

"Then," cried Oonomoo, "both of you shall perish!"

With this the arrow left the bow and Molaton caught the feathered shaft fairly in his breast. He gave a sharp cry of agony and staggered toward the edge of the rock.

Leonita caught hold of the arrow and attempted to draw it from its human target, but without avail.

"Let the dead vanish!" exclaimed Oonomoo. "He will never press the bridal kiss upon the brow of Leonita!"

A strange cry welled from the bosom of Cotekon's daughter. Her beautiful face seemed to blanch in the awful terror of the moment. Wrapping her shapely arms the closer about the form of her dying lover she darted Oonomoo a last look of defiance and the next moment sprang with him over the beetling cliff to the starlit pool below.

The crystal waters received the devoted pair in their embrace and closing over them, sent a thousand silvery ripples toward either shore.

For a moment Oonomoo stood like a statue on the precipice as if horrified by the terrible tragedy he had brought about and then sprang forward. He gazed down into the waters which had become motionless over the entombed lovers, then gripping his bow and the remaining arrow, he bounded away like a deer.

Never again was the red murderer seen in the valley of the Catoctin. The bodies of the red lovers, still locked in their last fond embrace, were found by members of the tribe and given solemn burial, and from that day the scene of the tragedy has been called "Lovers' Leap."



THE MARCH TO SOUTH MOUNTAIN.

All day long the legions clad in Southern gray
Over the mountain, facing West, made their toilsome
way,
Up from the streets of Frederick, weary, dusty and
brown,
Tramping behind their flag, they came straight into
Middletown;
Men from far-off Texas, men from the old Gulf's line,
Men from the land of Georgia, as straight as her
straightest pine,
Youth from the heart of Virginia, with the child-blush
on each cheek,
And men from North Carolina, from glade and moun-
tain peak.

Hungry? Almost famished, as westward still they swung,
Out on the breezy Autumn air a tattered flag was flung;
Thirteen stars upon its cross and never a stripe was seen,
An alien banner floating in the enemy's land, I ween;
Cap o'er eye rode Jackson silently down the street,
With never a glance from left to right, for there were
none to greet,
Clanked the gleaming saber and shone the bayonet,
As onward pressed the legions in a march none shall
forget.

Grim and dark and ghostly the mountain loomed before;
Silent yet, but soon to shake beneath the battle's roar;
Brother marched by brother and father marched by son,
Some to fall upon the crest before the day was done;
There'd widows be in Georgia and orphans by the sea,

And there'd be ruthless burial for the men who marched
with Lee.
Aye, there were those who never more would see the old
gate swing
In a welcome home where far away the Southern rivers
sing.

For they had crossed the mountain with musket and with
blade,
And they had sworn to save the flag that Southern hands
had made,
To plant it on the Maryland hills against a Maryland sky,
And round its torn and shattered folds like cavaliers to
die;
And die they did among the pines that fringe the moun-
tain way,
The beardless boy from Georgia and the dotard in his
gray,
The sturdy men from Tennessee and Alabama's meads,
And Mississippi's bravest sons, famed for their warlike
deeds.

They held the grand old mountain, the heroes clad in
blue,
Till every leaf and every stone received a crimson hue.
They rolled the gray-hued billows back from off the
bloody crest,
They met the foemen hand to hand heroic, breast to
breast;
And when the blushing morning dawned to show the
battle's scars
The flag that topped the mountain peak had eight-and-
thirty stars,
And somewhere towards Antietam's plain, but not in
victory,
A tattered banner floated o'er the silent tent of Lee.

Oh, there were lonesome bivouacs where fair Catoctin
runs
And there were deep gaps in the ranks of Southland's
bravest sons,
And many a young wife waited and many a sweetheart
sigh'd
For those who in their cherished gray upon the moun-
tain died;
And roses sought the valley when came once more the
Spring,
And to the meadows clad in green the robin came to
sing;
The tuneful bells of Middletown in steeples white and
tall,
Sent forth a holy song of peace that touched the moun-
tain wall.



POLLY CRUMBINE'S JAKE.

GRIM-VISAGED WAR had at last entered Middle-
town Valley. A few eager horsemen in gray, the
advance of Lee's army of invasion, had drawn
rein upon the summit of Catoctin ridge, and their hungry
eyes were drinking in the magnificent scene that lay be-
fore them. This scene, far in the light of the September
sun, looked like a new Canaan to the "famished rebel
horde" who for months had been living in a devastated
region which for nearly two years had been the battle
and raiding ground for thousands.

The Valley people knew of Lee's coming; they knew,
too, that McClellan was pushing after him and they

feared that between the two armies they would fare badly. The Valley was loyal and when the raiding rebels reached Frederick, headed as it seemed for Middletown, there were hurried consultations, the hiding of many valuables and consternation generally.

The Crumbines lived in the western part of the valley over against the mountain in a large old-fashioned farm house, such as dot that particular region today. The family consisted of two old people, a daughter named Polly and a son named Reuben.

Polly, with whom my story particularly deals, was a girl of twenty. She was pretty enough to be the acknowledged belle of the district and her red tresses, often unbound for the sport of the mountain winds, did not detract from her loveliness, but instead added to it.

Of course Polly had lovers. What Maryland girl has not, and strange to say,—for there is no accounting for tastes—her choice was a long, lank fellow named Grossnickle. Since Polly liked Jake, of course Jake liked Polly, and the fact that he could carry off the prize for the asking rendered him a decidedly happy man. Jake, however, had a fear of war.

There wasn't much warrior blood in his veins, and when the first rumors of Lee's advance filtered into the valley he told Polly that he guessed he would "cut and clear out" for the present.

"I don't want to be grafted by them doggoned rebels," he said, as a shiver crept up his spine. "I ain't no fighter, anyhow, as you know Polly." (Polly knew he wasn't or he wouldn't have run away from Tom Smeltzer) "I'm not ready to be stood up before a lot of cannon and be shot to pieces. It outfits a man for everything. He's of no account afterwards. I like you powerful well, Polly, and if you want a whole husband you'll not object to my hiding out somewhere."

"Well," said Polly, "the Union army is after the rebels

and when General McClellan comes into the valley you can show your colors."

"Yes, and be clapped into a blue uniform and have a gun placed in my hands? Polly, it's six o' one and a half dozen of the other. I don't see much difference between General Lee gobbling up your Jake, to Little Mac taking him in tow. I want to be neutral, a non-combatant, as they say in the papers. I always thought I would make a better non-combatant than a soldier, anyhow. But I'll come back, Polly, never you fear. You are Jake's lodestone, and I couldn't keep away from you to save my life."

"But where will you go, Jake?"

"Don't I know the old mountain, Polly? There isn't a fox run that I'm not as familiar with as I am with the streets of Middletown. Catch me? I'd like to see the smartest rebel smell me out, that I would. They'll be down here in a day or two, but they won't find Jake Grossnickle on the premises."

After a little further discussion it was decided that Jake should hide out till all the danger was over, and the two parted with many warm manifestations of love. There was a good deal of sorrow in Polly's heart that night that she was going to lose Jake even for a spell, and for a day or two afterward, filled with a new secret she was decidedly in the dumps, from which not even the good-natured Reuben could rouse her.

Lee came "over the mountain wall," his gray-clad cohorts pouring down into the new Land of Promise, taking pretty much what tickled their appetites and spreading far and wide in battle array over the valley. Polly Crumbine, glad that Jake was out of the path of the invading legions, stood at the farm gate and fearlessly watched the dusty ranks sweep by.

"Hello!" bawled a big Georgian, as he caught sight of

the maid, "I'd like to have a lock of that hair to light my pipe with—I'm out of matches."

Polly blushed indignation to the top of her fair temples, but did not reply.

"How many beaux have you got?" asked another rebel. "Haven't seen yer since I left Texas. What'll you take for a kiss anyway?"

"More than your Confederacy is worth!" retorted Polly, unable to restrain herself, and her shot brought a loud guffaw from the passing regiment.

"Gee whiz!" snorted the Texan, "these Maryland beauties are loaded," and he tramped on, all the starch taken out of him by Polly's reply.

Nearly all that day along the Valley pike and past the Crumblin home tramped the men in gray. Not wishing to irritate them at the risk of being insulted, Polly retired indoors and watched the marching lines from a safe distance.

More than once she wondered what had become of Jake. She had not heard from him since his departure. No doubt he was safe enough somewhere in the mountain, for as he had assured her, he knew every foot of that spook-haunted territory and would be able to avoid conscription. She scanned the sides of the mountain just beginning to show the golden fringe of Autumn, in hopes of seeing a handkerchief flutter for a moment among the bushes, a signal that Jake was still safe and on the alert, but not a single signal was vouchsafed her.

It seemed to the inhabitants of the Valley that the rebel army would never cease coming. The stars and bars seemed everywhere and cavalymen dashed hither and thither looking after the stragglers and keeping all faced to the front.

"This is about the toughest proposition I ever tackled," ejaculated a man who from a secure place on the mountain looked down upon the Crumblin farm "I've

been two hull days away from Polly and it's General Lee's fault. I don't see what business he had to invade Maryland for anyhow, and keep a poor non-combatant like me in hot water. I can't stand this much longer, and when the last ragged rebel is gone I'm going back to Polly if it costs me my life. She looks like a mere speck from here when she comes into the yard, and I know she's all tore up about her Jake. What if one o' them confounded rebels should take a notion to carry her off? Well, if he should—and here Jake clenched his hands at the bare idea, "I'd foller him to the devil or to Texas but what I'd get her back, and me a non-combatant, too!"

When night came and the last line in gray had left the Valley to lose itself somewhere in the mountain, Jake left his hide-out. As he had expressed himself, he could stand it no longer. Why, he had seen Polly every day for months and to be away from her for forty-eight hours was the most inhuman torture.

Jake did not know that Polly had at last confided her secret to Reuben. Jake was gone, she said, gone to hide out till the war had left the Valley. Polly told Reuben that Jake would not return till the last sign of danger had vanished, but Reuben doubtfully shook his head.

"He won't stay that long, Polly," the brother said. "Jake's dead gone on you, as a blind man can see, and he'll be sneaking back and run into some sort of a trap."

"Heavens!" cried the girl, "you don't really think he'll do that, Reuben?"

"When a feller's dead in love there's no telling what he won't do. If you had married Jake in the summer—"

"But he never asked me to," interrupted Polly, with a blush. "He's a bit backward, Jake is, and——"

"Yes," grinned Reuben, "when a feller can hold a girl on his lap half the night he must be all-fired backward. I mention no names, Polly, so you needn't get

red. If Jake wouldn't ask you, why in the old Harry didn't you ask Jake?"

"That was Jake's business, not mine," responded Polly as she walked away, leaving Reuben at the woodpile.

It was night when Jake, venturing from his hide-out, slipped over the mountain trail with the noiseless tread of the rabbit. He thought that the last rebel had left the valley else he would not have ventured forth. He didn't count on the rear guard nor on the little army of spies detailed to keep track of McClellan's movements, but from what he had seen from his retreat, the last gray back was out of the Valley.

Jake soon found himself in the neighborhood of Polly's home. He was cautious despite what he had seen and he made up his mind that, having seen Polly, he would go back and remain until the Union Army had come and gone. When he entered the yard he found no lights at the house. The family had been so annoyed by the Confederates that they had resolved to set no lights in the house, which would only attract scattered bands of prowlers and invite insult and plundering.

Jake was astounded when he found the farmhouse wrapped in darkness. What had happened? A thousand fears flashed through his mind. Had the rebels carried Polly away? And had the little household gone in pursuit? As he shivered at these thoughts which had taken possession of him he caught a sound that sent a chill to his marrow. It came from up the road toward Middletown and the next moment his ears were assailed by the voices of men and the jingle of military accoutrements.

The poor refugee's soul was at once filled with a thousand new fears. He had come back at the wrong time after all. He had walked into a rebel trap and now he would be caught and sent to the front.

It was the last chapter in the agonizing story of his life.

Jake knew the premises as he knew his own home. He had kissed Polly on nearly every foot of ground about the house and if he couldn't outwit the approaching enemy it wouldn't be his fault. For some moments he debated what to do, then he hastened to a large outhouse where many barrels and boxes were stored, and above all, some of those juicy smoked hams that Polly's fair hands knew so well how to prepare. The voices were louder now; in fact, the rebels were in the yard and, driven to desperation, Jake laid his hands on the edge of a Baltimore hog'shead and dexterously dropped into its capacious interior.

The next moment the strong-lunged leader of the rebel detachment ordered the occupants of the house to come forth. There was no reply at first and it was not until the Virginian had threatened to apply the torch, which he had no thought of doing in reality, that the door opened and the Crumbines showed themselves.

The marauders were hungry. They hadn't time to put their feet under the Crumbine table, but they would be satisfied with some smoked hams, a few jars of preserves, in fact, with any old thing that would tempt a soldier's palate.

"We prefer hams," remarked the rebel captain. "My old mother used to say that a Maryland ham is fit for the gods. She was a mother and she knew. So trot out your hams or give us the key to the smoke house—By George! the boys have found it already!"

The rebel officer turned away as a shout announced that his men had found entrance to Jake's retreat. They were a jolly but boisterous set of soldiers and when good Mother Crumbine heard the pillaging she clasped her hands and invoked protection upon her soap and feathers. And such a lot of feathers as she had! Nu-

merous pickings had been heaped together for future sale for downy featherbeds and now if those ragged rebels should discover her treasure—

Just then a stentorian voice emanated from the frame building.

"Here's a hogshead o' fine hams, Cap'n!" it said.

"Never see'd so many in all my days. The Yanks hev buried 'em in feathers."

"Bring them out!" broke in the eager Captain.

The following moment through the wide doorway of the old-fashioned outhouse, propelled by a dozen eager hands, came the big Baltimore hogshead, and as the land in front sloped a little it gathered momentum, nor stopped till it reached the family porch.

"It's my feathers," cried Mother Crumbine at sight of the hogshead. "You can't eat feathers, men. There, don't upset the hogshead—"

"Up-end her, boys! We won't be deceived by a Yankee trick."

The rebels with a shout caught hold of the hogshead, tipped it suddenly, lifted it as quickly and sent it rolling and bumping toward the spring house. This act left a heap of feathers on the ground and as the ham-hunters sprang forward to investigate, there arose from the feathery mass the oddest looking object human eye had ever seen.

It resembled some great grotesque bird covered completely with feathers of nearly every hue, and but for the wild yell that came from the top of the mass the astonished rebels would have investigated further, and not cut dirt as they did. They stood not on the order of their going, but fled pell-mell down the road as if a legion of fiends was at their heels.

Suddenly the strange thing bounded toward the house, *its feathery arms* outstretched, and there came from un-

seen lips the eager cry of "Polly! Polly! Don't you know me?"

The young girl stood for a moment on the porch, and then started forward.

Reuben, however, was ahead of her. He reached the grotesque thing in one bound and the next moment he shouted back—

"I'll be hamswitched if it isn't Jake, Polly! Jake's come back, but he needs picking."

And so he did, and while the still frightened rebels hurried down the road, Jake was relieved of his feathery garments and had told Polly that he guessed he wouldn't be a non-combatant any longer.



BEFORE THE TROLLEY CAME.

Before they got the trolley o'er the hills from Frederick town,

Which dips into the Valley lying matchless 'neath the sky,

Our grand-daughters, pretty maidens, galloped horseback up and down

The winding mountain shaded ways their wedding gowns to buy;

The milliners of Frederick kept a handsome stock in trade,

The sort that caught the brides-elect from 'way across the hills,

And lingered long within the shops the blushing Maryland maid

A-choosing of her furbelows, her flounces and her frills.

They came from every corner of the Valley passing fair,
The Rudy and the Routzahn and the Koogle girls, I
know,

The Schaeffers and the Remsbergs and the Ahalts all
were there,

The Alexanders and the Flooks, the Kellers, too, I
trow;

The Youngs, the Poffinbargers, the Delauders and the
Whites,

The Schildtknechts and the Lighters and the Bowluses
and more,

The Applemans, the Wachters and the Wheelers—O the
nights

That met them on the mountain ere their jolly rides
were o'er!

From many a spreading manor came the laughing Val-
ley belles

In calico and gingham gowns, with Cupid at the rein,
They galloped madly o'er the pike and thro' the haunted
dells,

And dipped at last with ruddy cheeks down into Fred-
erick's plain;

The Gavers, the Kefauvers and the merry Smeltzer girls,
The Sheffers and the Tomses, fair as Sheba's famous
queen,

How oft the mountain breezes dallied with their silken
curls!

How the sweet Catoctin roses jealous of them grew,
I ween!

You can't begin to count upon your fingers at this day
The girls who rode the mountain long before the trol-
ley came,

The Herrings and the Kepplers and the Doubs all knew
the way

From Middletown to Patrick Street in Frederick Town
of fame;
The mantuamakers knew them all and hailed them with
delight,
They sold them this, they sold them that from hat to
silken gown;
With their purchase on the saddle and their faces beam-
ing bright
They galloped back with happy thoughts again to
Middletown.

O gleesome were the mornings in the misty long ago,
Before the trolley whistled in the Valley far and wide,
When our grandmas crossed the mountain in the sun-
shine and the snow
To buy with many a blush and smile the costumes of
the bride;
Methinks I hear their laughter in the corridors of time,
Methinks I see their pretty cheeks as valley roses red,
Tho' well I know the grasses grow above them in a
clime
O'er which throughout the varied year the heavens
gently spread.

They sleep where bright Catoctin hums its tuneful sum-
mer song,
They rest beneath the daisies that clothe the vale in
white,
The wedding bells rang out for them a happy life and
long
They live in hearts that bless them still despite death's
chilling night.
Yes, there were blissful moments e'en before the trolley
came
And cut its way adown the slope and pierced the
Valley towns;

Then, is it strange that I should hear the voice of lass
and dame
Who rode the Frederick long ago to buy their bridal
gowns?



“TURN ME OVER.”

A TALE OF THE OLD WISE CABIN ON SOUTH MOUNTAIN.

ALMOST everybody on South Mountain knew Tommy Lutz. At the time of our narrative—June 1863—he was a boy of twelve, a freckled boy with a shock of tawny hair. He was moreover an adopted lad and lived not far from the famous Wise cabin so closely connected with the battle on the mountain in the preceding September. One of Tommy's occupations was watching the cows that grazed along the mountain road, and while at this duty he was generally whistling and hurling stones at the chipmunks that darted in and out of the stone fences.

One evening the boy might have been seen occupying the top rail of a fence that ran near the Reno monument. The sun would soon sink to rest and even while Tommy sat there it went down and the summer dusk came on.

The cows had gone home, but Tommy still occupied the stile, probably thinking about the battle which he remembered so well, although while it raged he was crouched in the darkest corner of his master's cellar *shivering with fright.*



THE OLD WISE CABIN ON SOUTH MOUNTAIN.



The last chipmunk had vanished and the boy was about to follow the trail of the little mountain herd when he saw a figure coming up the road toward the Wise domicile. Thinking it was some one who lived on the mountain, the boy did not pay much attention to it, but a moment later, when it was nearly abreast of him, his hair seemed to rise erect and a chill of terror shot through his frame.

The object had the shape of a man and it did not seem to touch ground as it came forward, but just glided along as he had heard disembodied spirits usually did.

Objects about Tommy were still visible and all at once the boy discovered that he could look right through the man and make out things beyond.

This was enough for Tommy Lutz. With a yell that must have caused the chipmunks to shiver in their nests he fell back and the bullet-shattered rail, giving way beneath him, he was precipitated to the ground. In another moment he had bounded to his feet and was flying toward the wood, letting out more horrified cries which seemed to accelerate his speed.

"It's a spook! a soldier's spook!" cried Tommy, leaping over every obstacle in his flight. "Old Wise sees 'em every night. The woods is full o' 'em, but they don't ketch Tommy Lutz if his legs hold out."

The aforesaid legs must have held out for at last the speeding form disappeared in the forest and a scared boy tore through the underbrush there.

Meantime on a bench in front of his war-time home, Mr. Wise, or "Old Wise" as he was called, was enjoying his nocturnal pipe. The night was warm and the wind that stirred the trees about the shack toyed with the columns of smoke which rose above the mountaineer's head. The old man probably had heard the terrified screams of Master Lutz, but had given them little heed.

Tommy was liable to do anything from chasing animals to getting into melon patches without leave.

All at once Old Wise took the pipe from his mouth and leaned forward with wonder in his eyes.

Something had crossed his line of vision. In fact, he was confronted by a man who had stopped within a few feet of him and was now regarding him in suppressed silence.

Then Wise noticed the same peculiarity that had startled Tommy Lutz.

He could see through the strange figure. It was as transparent as a dripping of lemon jelly, but he could make out that the haunt was clad in the tattered uniform of a Confederate soldier, and Wise saw a darkish spot on his breast almost as large as his hand.

The corn-cob pipe trembled in the old man's grasp, but he made out to keep his head under the uncommon circumstances. Plucking up all the courage he had at his command he said in as cheery a tone as possible.

"Good night, sir. It's a pleasant evening—"

A long arm was raised, checking further speech which Wise did not regret, for his tongue was already at the end of its string.

Wise had ceased to hear the "old woman" pottering around in the cabin, the door of which stood open, so intent was he in gazing at his ghostly visitor.

The apparition came a little nearer.

Mr. Wise fell back against the logs of the cabin and stared; he could do nothing more.

"I've come to have you turn me over," came from the lips of the spook in sepulchral tones. "It's a simple request, Mr. Wise, but it's all I want done."

Wise tried to speak twice before he succeeded.

"To—turn—you—over?" he managed to gasp, and he started at the sound of his own voice.

"Why not? You put me down the well. After the

battle here you buried a lot of us. I was the last man and you'll find me on top.

Old Wise was silent.

"It's an uncomfortable position. I can't rest lying on my face and head downward at that. Really, Mr. Wise, I can't get my breath."

"Your breath? But you were dead when I put you in."

"I know, but I'm uncomfortable just the same. I want you to turn me over."

"Wise?" said a woman's voice at this moment from the interior of the cabin.

"Yes, mother," responded the old man.

"Fetch me your pipe. I can't find mine—"

"Yes, yes," but Wise did not stir.

"If you don't turn me over at once, Mr. Wise," said the haunt, "I'll be here every night till you do."

"But it's a job," said Wise.

"What's that to do with me when you're a strong man? You put me in the well, didn't you?"

"Well, you had to be put somewhere. And the well was there."

To this the haunt made no reply but passed a thin, ghostly hand across its brow and looked straight at Wise who wished he had obeyed his better half by transferring the needed pipe.

"You'll do it tonight, won't you, Mr. Wise?" pleaded the spook. "I've come all the way to have you turn me."

"But I—I—"

"Oh, yes, you will. I'm Jim Tabbs, of Virginia. The Yankees shot us all to pieces along these stone walls. We never got into just such a mess before. It was something awful."

"I know it was," said Wise, growing a little familiar. "I was here. I saw you come up from toward Middletown that day—"

"Yes. I was sergeant of my company and if I hadn't got into the war I wouldn't be here asking you to turn me over. And, by the way, Wise, you'll find my pipe in my pocket if the Yanks didn't hook it and you kin have that for the trouble of turning me over."

Wise now heard his wife moving in the yard back of the house and hoped she would remain there till he got through with this unearthly visitor.

"You'll do it, won't you, Mr. Wise?" asked the spook. "I can't rest in peace till I'm turned over."

"I'll do it," blurted Wise, "if it's any accommodation."

"It's the greatest in the world. Think how you would feel if you had been lying in a well all this time without being turned."

Wise acknowledge that he would feel very badly.

"Of course you would and it would be worse if you were at the bottom of the mess, as some o' the boys are. If you don't turn me, Mr. Wise, I'll haunt you every night till you die."

"I'll turn you over if it kills me," said Wise. "It's an ugly job and not to my liking."

"I don't care whether it is or not," was the reply. "I've got to be turned and that's the long and short of it. Now, mind your duty. Don't force me back here till I am turned or you're dead."

With this the harnt began gradually to recede and Old Wise saw it dimly in the middle of the road.

"Remember, Mr. Wise," came back on the gentle wind that stirred the leafy branches of the trees. "I've got to be turned, that's all."

For ten minutes after the disappearance of the ghost in gray the old mountaineer sat motionless on the shakety bench. His face was the color of ashes and his strength was entirely gone. He had seen ghosts before, plenty of them, but this was the first one to which he had ever talked.

"Ain't you goin' to fetch the pipe?" came from the house in tones of command. "I don't know what's got into you o' late, Wise."

"I'm coming," responded Wise, rising with an effort. "I really forgot."

"Better rub your head and git some o' your thoughts started."

Mr. Wise shambled into the house, his strength still out of his body, and his wife noticed that he shut the door behind him.

"I've got to turn him over," said Wise to himself. "Hang it all, it's turn or be haunted all my days. I wonder how he knowed he was lying face downwards in the well? The last man I put down, too. If he'd a been the first one what a job I would have!"

Still pursuing reflections of this nature Wise went to bed, but not to sleep. All night he tossed about like a man in agony and just before daybreak he slipped quietly out and found a spade. With the sweat of terror on his forehead he proceeded to the old well which was near the cabin and began to dig.

The well was dry, but it was the grave of some fifty Confederates who had been thrown into it for want of better burial after the battle of South Mountain, and he, Wise, had assisted in the burial.

At last by dint of courage he reached the first body in that common tomb.

"He was right," exclaimed Wise as he stooped over and looked at the body. "He's on his face sure enough. Shall I take the pipe? I never could bring myself to take a single whiff of it."

Setting his teeth hard he reached down and by dint of tugging turned the body over. Then he straightened the limbs as well as the small space would permit. He ventured to search the pockets, but they revealed noth-

ing and much rejoiced at this, he began to shovel in the earth.

"I hup he'll get along now!" growled Wise. "He's turned, anyhow."

With this he went back into the house and breathed free once more.

The upshot of the whole matter is that the ghost of the rebel soldier was laid and he never, so far as Old Wise knew, revisited the scene of his strange burial. Whatever became of Tommy Lutz no one ever knew. He literally vanished, frightened away forever by the harnt in gray. Old Wise kept his adventure to himself, though it afterward leaked out, but it is said that the Shoemakers, who inhabit the Wise cabin on the mountain, have heard the story we have told them, from hints dropped by them from time to time.



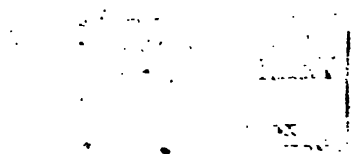
WHERE CATOCTIN SEEKS THE SEA.

There are fields of modest daisies,
There are roses sweet and fair,
And from dawn until the gloaming
There are bird-songs on the air;
There are mountains capped with cedars,
There is childish laughter free,
There's a hum of bees in clover
Where Catoctin seeks the sea.

There's an echo softly stealing
Through the dell and o'er the down,
'Tis the echo of the music
Of the bells of Middletown;



WHERE CATOCTIN FLOWS.



Far across the sunlit valley
Thro' the garb of bush and tree,
Floats the ever sacred anthems
Where Catoctin seeks the sea.

There the peach's cheeks are crimson,
And the winds seem e'er at play,
And the cherries hang in clusters,
All along the mountain way;
You can hear the merry children,
With their laughter full and free,
Making love among the roses,
Where Catoctin seeks the sea.

'Neath many a bridge that's olden,
Now in sun and now in shade,
Flits the ever-busy river
Thro' the meadow and the glade;
Ay, a sound is always rising
Like a paean rich and free
O'er the fair and fertile valley
Where Catoctin seeks the sea.



AT TWELVE O' THE CLOCK.

AMONG the many thousand of gray-clad men who marched under Lee's banners during the memorable invasion of Maryland in 1862, was a young private in one of the Virginia regiments. He came of one of the best families in Maryland, the head of which emigrated to Virginia a few years before the war, but the boy, although he grew to manhood amid

the beauties of the Shenandoah Valley, retained the fondest recollections of the old Maryland homestead.

Percy Ingram might not have entered the Confederate Army had he remained in the Valley of the Catoctin, but the tidal wave of secession engulfed him in the new home and with some of his young companions he enlisted at the call of the "Mother of Presidents."

It was something for him to get back to Maryland, even as an invader, but there was a tie stronger than his love for the old State. The pretty playmate of his boyhood dwelt almost in the shadow of South Mountain, a young girl now nineteen, vivacious and as free as the air she breathed, and, what pleased the young Confederate more than all, was the fact that her cause was his cause, though her parents were staunch friends of the Union.

The Eyler home was visible from the summit of Catoctin ridge and the first glance young Ingram took across the valley from its crest ended where a certain roof peeped above a clump of trees. He carried in his pocket a recent letter from Betty Eyler, saying that she would meet him at twelve o' the clock after nightfall on the broad rocks of Lover's Leap, their old trysting place.

Over the most beautiful valley in the world streamed the ranks in gray, down through the streets of Middletown, ragged, hungry and footsore, with the slopes of South Mountain waiting to become a sepulcher for many.

It was not long until, looking back from the mountain, the Confederates beheld their old foes, who had dogged their footsteps since crossing the Potomac.

"I reckon you expect to see her this time," sneered a young sergeant to Ingram, whose gaze had again wandered toward they Eyler home.

"What is that to you, Thompson?" was the quick *retort*.

"You needn't flare up over it. Don't we all know that you've had nothing in your head but Betty Eyler ever since we started on this raid? You've been talking in your sleep about her and mebbe you've got an engagement with her now."

Ingram gave his comrade another look and walked away.

"He's touchy," laughed Thompson. "When a fellow has 'girl' on the brain he's unfitted for everything else."

Over in the farmhouse among the trees a young girl kept tab on the war guns on the mountain. She went to a little rise near the house and watch the long white puffs that shot out and upward from the jagged sides while the war of artillery and small arms was almost incessant. She knew there were others who were watching that same conflict, for she could see people on the roofs of Middletown and now and then caught sight of the swift couriers who darted along the pike acquainting McClellan with the progress of the battle.

"We have won!" cried John Eyler, as he suddenly appeared in the dooryard of his home when the war of arms had died away. "I say, Bet, what makes you look so white? Lee has been whipped and McClellan holds the Old South!"

Betty swallowed hard.

She turned away and went into the house, thence to her little room darkened by the shadows of the battle night. It seemed as though all her hopes had been dashed to earth. Thus far she had kept her sentiments from the family and the letters from young Ingram had been carefully concealed. Now all seemed lost. Lee had failed to hold the mountain, but, worst of all, the fate of her lover was uncertain.

She could almost hear the rumbling of the ambulance wagons that jolted over the turnpike with their loads of wounded and dying humanity. There were windrows

of dead in Wise's field, their ghastly faces upturned to the stars, but these, thank Heaven, she could not see.

Not until within an hour of midnight did the half-distracted maiden quit her room. Then, remembering her appointment with Percy at Lover's Leap, she stole out of the house and turned her face in that direction. She would keep her part of the engagement, anyhow. If he were alive, he would come. If dead he would not.

Betty well knew the way to the old spot. More than once they had stood there watching the glimmering waters of Catoctin in the moonlight. A solemn stillness had settled down over the battlefield. What had become of the rebel army she did not know. She only knew,—and it was gall to her—that McClellan held slope and crest and that somewhere the ragged Confederates were growling in defeat.

Alone on the rocks of Lover's Leap, Betty counted the minutes that left her lonelier still. The waters shone dimly in the starlight, the ghostly pines took on new weirdness and from somewhere drifted to her ears the dismal hoot of the night owl.

And suddenly there came from behind her a strange footstep. The girl turned with a start and tried to pierce the shadows that hemmed her in. She was on the eve of investigating, when a figure burst into view and with a little cry of "Percy!" she darted forward, but as suddenly checked herself.

"You missed it this time, girl," laughed a voice while she stood like a statue before the speaker.

"You!" exclaimed Betty. "So 'tis you, Dan Thompson?"

"Why not? Isn't this my old stamping ground. And, pray, haven't I a right to come back to it when the battle has spared me?"

"I do not question your right to come here. This is common ground, but——"

"Oh, yes. You thought he would come. Isn't that it, Miss Betty?"

"Yes, if you must know it!" exclaimed John Eyler's daughter.

"It's twelve o' the clock, too," grinned Thompson.

"But how did you know—"

"Never mind that. We'll not discuss that point at present. I guess he won't come."

"Then—"

"Some of us had to go down over yonder," and Thompson pointed toward the mountain. "You see all of us could not escape. I was quite near him when he got his discharge."

Betty made no reply. It was all over, then, the romance and the hope, the dreams of the future and the allurements of love.

"They got the best of us today," pursued Thompson. "We held the slopes as long as we could, but those Western men are tigers."

"Why didn't you go down with your comrades?" asked Betty, flushing.

"Because I was spared. The war isn't over yet. This is only a little backset."

"Where is he? On what part of the mountain did he fall?"

"Oh, you're really anxious?" almost brutally asked Thompson. "You've forgotten that I used to call a couple of years ago."

"That is past, sir," exclaimed Betty. "You will do me a favor by not referring to it here."

"Just as if you can check me," was the reply. "I am here in his place. It was to be twelve o' the clock."

"How did you know?"

"Your letter, girl."

"Then you've robbed the dead?"

"Never mind what I found nor what I took. It was to be at twelve o' the clock, you said."

The young girl drew back and looked at the man who had come in the other one's place. He was handsome, but one of the wild young bloods of the Valley, strong, passionate, and wilful—his parents' shame—but for all that no doubt a good soldier in the new cause.

"I cannot remain," said the girl. "You must let me go. Remember, my appointment here was not with you."

"But as substitute I take the place of the principal," flashed Thompson. "He is over on the mountain. I am here."

"Then you can remain or go back to your beaten comrades. It is all one to me which course you pursue."

Dan Thompson was not the man to let a prize like Betty get beyond his reach. To lose her now might be to lose her forever, and when the girl essayed to quit the sport his hand gripped her wrist.

"Not quite so fast, my mountain bird!" he exclaimed. "They don't know, Percy often said, that you're a rebel. What if I were to proclaim the fact to the people of the old valley?"

"If you choose you can do so," and Betty retreated the full length of her tether. "It would be a coward's work, don't you think, Dan Thompson?"

"I put no estimate on my doings," said he. "I only know that I have you here in my power and by the stars up yonder, you must promise—"

"Never," broke in the white-faced girl. "I promised him and I promise none other. The Union bullets have not absolved me. They have only intensified my love for the man you left on the mountain."

This was the bitterest gall to the man on the rock at Lover's Leap. One look into the eyes of his beautiful

prisoner, a quick jerk towards himself and then a smile and piercing cry for help.

It came suddenly, tumultuously, through the bushes on the little slope above the rock. Dan Thompson, still keeping his grip, whirled as a figure wearing the same uniform in which he had fought, sprang into view. He and Betty saw the newcomer at the same moment. The girl, by a prodigious effort, broke loose from her insulter's grasp and saw the two men clinch in the starlight.

Not a word was spoken in the struggle on the stones. The gasping girl even heard the sound of the creek below and held her breath while she watched the two men swaying back and forth, at times at the very verge of the rock.

She saw at last one figure that seemed to have lost its footing. The other seemed to hold it an instant in mid-air, then there was a sudden descent and a great splash in the waters of the Catoctin thirty feet below.

Which one had triumphed? Betty Eyler did not know. A second seemed eternity, then the victor turned upon her and she saw in the starlight the face of Percy Ingram.

The young Confederate held out his hands.

"It's past twelve o' the clock," he said. "I was a little late, but when one is knocked unconscious on a battlefield, he counts not time. When I recovered I found that I had been robbed—robbed of your last letter, girl, and I made haste to keep the appointment."

"But what of him?" asked Betty as she looked from her lover's arms over the rock.

"Nothing but a ducking, perhaps," was the reply and for a moment they stood silent on Lover's Leap, looking toward Middletown.

It was some bruises and a ducking, and though the two young men returned to the rebel ranks, but one came

back after the war to claim the hand of Betty Eyer.

The other, Dan Thompson, slept somewhere in the Wilderness.



THE OLD TURNPIKE

Yonder's the turnpike winding down
Over the mountain to Middletown,
Fringed with daisies that laugh and nod,
Crimson poppies and golden rod,
Fields and orchards on either side,
And woodlands stretching far and wide,
Thro' the summer's sun and winter's snow
Wanders the trail of the long ago.

Olden way, in the dim past trod
By many who slumber beneath the sod,
Over thy stones in the years agone,
The old stage coaches rattled on;
Many a lass in a bride's attire
O'er thee swept to her heart's desire,
And on the cheek of many a miss
In the old, old stages burned a kiss.

Over the pike in days of yore
Rumbled the wagons to Baltimore,
Six-horse teams to the creaking wain,
With jingling bells at the leader's mane,
With a sturdy farmer astride the black,
And the roan alert to the whip's sharp crack,
Dear old pike! what tales untold
Linger around thy days of old.

Up from Frederick, winding west,
Over Catoctin's rugged crest,
Into a valley to mortal eyes
As fair as the plains of Paradise,
Whilst in the shadows deeply brown
Jingled the bells of Middletown,
Upon whose heavenward pointing spires
Rested the day-god's final fires.

Nevermore will the human tide
Over the old road swiftly glide,
The rickety stage has had its day,
The "Conestoga" has passed away,
Where grandmother rode in the creeping wain
The trolley drips from mount to plain,
And over the stones of the days gone by
The mighty "autos" flash and fly.

Rich in legends of vale and hill,
Dear old pike, I love thee still;
Out of the years where the gray mists lie
Come the laugh and the lullaby—
The laugh of a maid and a mother's song
As the olden vehicles jolted along,
Till lost in the shades of the Past's dim day
When the turnpike old was a famous way.



MR. GROSSNICKLE'S GHOST.

A WEIRD STORY OF OLD QUEBEC SCHOOL.

IT WAS many years before the great war and old Quebec School was in its glory. The young folks of "Snitz Scaffold," as the place was sometimes called, held spelling matches and were wont to escort one another along the country roads to and from their several homes. As a matter of course there was more or less love-making on these occasions, and the rural swains found life partners among the ruddy-cheeked damsels who lived in the neighborhood.

Among the residents of the district was one Amos Grossnickle, who had drifted into the realm of bachelorhood, an event for which the girls of Quebec are not to be held accountable. Amos, it was said, was too choicy; he couldn't just make up his mind as to which lass pleased him most and so he bowled along over the highway of single blessedness, living alone in a little two-story house not far from the school house.

He wasn't a bad looking individual, but he had a habit of wearing one suit of clothes till it was ready to drop from his back, and even then he squirmed when he had to seek a tailor in Middletown. Poor Amos! He was the butt of many a joke because of his eccentricities and the girls poked fun at him even to his face, which he did not seem to heed.

It came to be rumored at last that Amos had made up his mind and the news spread like wildfire.

Miss 'Mandy Marks was the reported object of the bachelor's affections and when twitted about it, Amos would smile with an air of much secrecy, but no one *could induce him to "own the corn."*

The young lady, however, came out boldly when approached concerning the engagement and declared that Amos Grossnickle was the very last man upon whom she would set her heart.

"The very idea!" 'Mandy would exclaim. "Me marry a man who buys but one suit of clothes a year and jews the merchant down to the last penny? Perish the thought. I'd sooner eat an old maid's bread."

There was gossip in Quebec as elsewhere and of course 'Mandy's words were carried to Amos' ears.

"Well," drawled the old bachelor, "I mayn't be 'Mandy Marks' choice, but she'll have a ghost at her weddin' when she does tie up, that's certain."

In course of time Amos fell sick in his little home. There were some who said it was "lovesickness," but, be that as it may, one morning he was found dead in bed and no one could give an account of his last hours.

Half a year rolled by, and 'Mandy Marks boldly gave out that she had concluded to become a bride and that Joe Fuller was the proper person to have dominion over her. Joe wasn't a bad sort of fellow; his enemies said he had been "born tired," but he had a captivating way with the Quebec girls and was the best speller at the spelling-bees held in the old school house.

Soon after 'Mandy's announcement of the engagement preparations for the wedding began.

"It'll be a terrible affair," said Mother Hawks with a shake of her head. "Don't you remember what Amos said a while before he died, that if 'Mandy didn't have him she'd have a spook at her wedding? And that's what she's going to have, mind what I tell you."

"I don't believe dead people come back," ventured Mrs. Hawk's listener.

"You don't, eh? You haven't lived as long as I have. I've seen 'em, I have—real genuine ghosts right in this kentry. Didn't Poll Edmunds come back jes as she said

she would? And there was Tom Dowker what killed himself over near Burkettsville. His spook's been nosin' round here ever since and I've see'd it myself."

'Mandy only laughed when reminded of Amos' threat and said she didn't care for ghosts and that all the spooks in existence could not make her change her mind. Her heart, she went on to say, was "sot", on Joe Fuller, and she had never for a moment cared the least for Amos Grossnickle.

One night, just a week before the night set apart for the wedding, one of the Coovert boys, a lad of fifteen, came home in a state of terror and fainted the moment he entered the house. When he was brought to he exclaimed that he had seen Mr. Grossnickle in the hills, that the old recluse was playing mumblepeg by himself, as Amos was wont to do, on a knoll in the moonlight.

"It was Mr. Grossnickle," declared the boy. "I see'd him with my own eyes and he wore the same old suit o' drab he had on when they buried him."

There was no arguing the boy out of his belief. He reasserted his story and the whole neighborhood became excited. People avoided the hill of the ghostly visitation; lovers, who were wont to stroll in that direction, went another way, and grazing cows were brought home on the double quick.

Two of the boldest young men in the neighborhood had volunteered to "lay the ghost" and in order to do this properly they proceeded to the haunted ground armed with old pepper-box pistols and stout cudgels. The people waited impatiently for their report and it came unexpectedly. The spook hunters came tearing down the path with white faces, declaring that Mr. Grossnickle had chased them and that he had cried out in sepulchral tones that he was in the neighborhood on pressing business, which would culminate on a certain night.

"It's 'Mandy Marks' wedding night!" exclaimed one of the listening women. "He said he would come back if she took another man and Amos was always a man of his word."

As for Miss Marks, she affected to laugh off the stories that came to her ears. What, Amos come back? Nonsense! She didn't believe "any such stuff," although she had heard some pretty well authenticated ghost stories in her time. She assured Joe that she was his and his alone, and that no spook should prevent their happiness. Joe promptly responded by saying with a good deal of bravado that if Amos should appear he (Joe) would take him by the collar, if he had one, and proceed to toss him into the next county—or words to this effect.

"'Mandy,'" said he, "do you think I intend to let a spook, and especially Amos Grossnickle's, snatch you from my heart? I'd die for you any time, 'Mandy, and if I can't be your husband, I'll see to it that you are not the bride of a spook."

As nothing further was seen of the disembodied spirit of Mr. Grossnickle since the two reports, the neighborhood quieted down. Miss Marks, the bride-elect, rode over the mountain on her own horse and made the final purchases for the wedding in Frederick. She came home by way of Middletown and stopped at the hotel where she partook of a hearty supper, admired by many as the coming bride of old Quebec, besides being mentioned as the girl who was to have a ghost at her wedding.

More than one envious girl watched her mount in front of the hotel and proceed on her way.

"Hang me," said Landlord Poffinberger, "if I was a young man and had no entangling alliances, I'd be willing to risk the ghost to marry that Quebec girl," and his remarks were endorsed by several who heard them.

The long-expected wedding day came.

There was a world of preparation at the Marks home and 'Mandy was in the midst of it. She looked younger and more beautiful than ever and Joe Fuller was the most envied young man in the neighborhood. He had fitted himself out regardless of expense at the tailor's and the wedding ring, which he had purchased on Patrick street, Frederick, he showed to his friends with a great deal of satisfaction.

"It's genuine," confided the prospective bride-groom. "It cost three dollars, cash down on the counter and I had to plank down fifty cents more to have our initials cut on the inside."

"You don't seem to keer for money, Joe," said one of his friends.

"What's three-and-a-half when I'm going to git the purtliest gal in Quebec Deestricht?"

"If Amos doesn't interfere."

"Let 'im come," snarled Joe, his face turning a trifle white despite his bravado. "If I ain't a match for all the ghosts in creation I'll swallow 'Mandy's wedding ring and clear the country."

It had been arranged that the wedding ceremony should take place in the schoolhouse, seeing that both the young people had received their education there and then 'Mandy's home was not large enough to accommodate all the invited guests.

The Reverend Mr. Bigler, an itinerant preacher from across the mountain, had been invited to unite the young people and he had already arrived. He was a sour-looking individual in a frayed coat of black and a long, over-pious face. He had a singular drawl to his voice and as he preached in the old-fashioned sing-song style, his notes were like the rasping of a file.

The ceremony was set for eight o'clock and long before that hour a line of folks moved toward Quebec school.

'Mandy, accompanied by her parents, arrived a few minutes before eight and were met by the would-be bridegroom, who looked his very best in his new garments. The school house had been lighted with paraffine lamps and the young girls of the district had decorated the place with evergreens appropriate to the occasion.

The house was soon filled to overflowing. A little place at the teacher's desk had been left clear for the ceremony and Mr. Bigler in his solemn black stood ready to unite the young couple.

Joe, with his heart in his throat, stood near the minister waiting impatiently. A solemn hush fell over the assemblage. Presently the crowd parted and 'Mandy, on the arm of her father, advanced toward the altar.

The minister, after lifting his hands to still the passing comments on the appearance of the pair, drawled out:

"Before I proceed to join for life, for weal or for woe, this young couple, if any one objects to the ceremony let him now speak or forever hold his peace."

A strange, almost ghostly silence followed these words. One might have heard his neighbor breathe. The very air was heavy, though the door was open and the trees were bending to a stiff breeze.

"Let the objector come forth now or forever remain silent," repeated Mr. Bigler.

Just then the lights set about the walls seemed to flicker as if some dreaded unseen power had them under control, a woman screamed, the crowd fell back toward the door toward which all looked, the crowd parted in silence and the only dog in the house shot through a window with a terror-like yelp.

'Mandy Marks, who had faced the minister, turned white and gazed down the aisle. In another moment she lay limp in Joe's arms, while Joe himself seemed ready to drop to the floor.

There in sight of all stood a luminous shape. Those who looked could see through it despite the ghastly flickering of the lamps. It was the wraith of Amos Grossnickle. All saw the well-known suit of drab, the long gaunt figure, the thin face and the spectral eyes. There was no mistaking the man who had come back from the unknown.

Slowly one ghostly hand was lifted. The long fingers covered the half dazed 'Mandy, but she saw them not. In less than a minute the old school house was emptied of its wedding guests. There was a haste to get from the spot. Those who had no conveyances stayed not upon the order of their going but got away as fast as their limbs could carry them. The lights in the school-house went out as if some wraith had snuffed them.

As for Joe Fuller, he tumbled headlong from the building and was found bleeding on the ground. It was never told how 'Mandy and her parents got home. For six weeks the girl lay in a fever in her little room while Quebec District discussed in whispers the awful visitation of Mr. Grossnickle's ghost.

Amos had kept his word!

The summer passed and the leaves turned yellow before 'Mandy Marks came out of her chamber. Then they told her that Joe had "packed his kit" and gone West, saying that if Amos Grossnickle wanted her so badly he could have her for all he cared, and 'Mandy said, when told this, that she wished she had taken Amos in the first place.

She never married and Mr. Grossnickle's ghost never again appeared at Quebec, and several years later it was said that some one had written from the West saying that Joe had had his initials and 'Mandy's erased from the three-dollar wedding ring and substituted for her's those of a sweetheart in Missouri.

THE OLD HOME.

I've read in books of travel of the lands that lie afar
In the matchless, pristine beauty of the beaming Orient
star,

Oft enraptured I have listened to the tales that have
been told

Of cottages that nestle in the Tyrol, famed and old;
But dearer to me is a home that in its beauty lies
Beneath the arches grand and deep of Maryland's cloud-
less skies,

And my thoughts fly often backward to the home so dear
to me,

For I love it as the sailor loves the ever-surging sea.

It nestles in a valley which as paradise is fair,
And all the dreams of childhood's years methinks are
lingering there,

And Summer comes with kisses and with flowers bright
and gay

To crown the little Valley town so beautiful alway;
I know a welcome awaits me in the place where I was
born,

Where first I looked upon the world one frosty winter
morn;

I long to walk the humble streets so very dear to me,
For I love them as the sailor loves the ever-restless sea.

There the mountains rise in grandeur, capped with God's
eternal blue,

There beat the hearts of dearest friends forever fast and
true,

There flows the clear Catoctin to the rivers far away,
Thro' landscapes fairer far than all the gardens of
Cathay;

No wonder that my thoughts return to scenes I'll ne'er
forget,
Though lofty mountains intervene I see and love them
yet,
And I long tonight to stand again beneath the old roof-
tree,
For I love it as the sailor loves his home upon the sea.

The years may sweep me onward to the pilgrim's final
goal,
But still I'll see the old home in the mirror of the soul;
The grass is growing green upon the graves of kindred
dear
Who take their rest from sorrows 'neath the skies so
soft and clear;
I long to turn my footsteps to the vale that lies im-
pearl'd,
'Mid the beauty and the grandeur of my poor heart's
only world—
To see once more the old home that is very dear to me,
For I love it as the sailor loves his blue and cherished
sea.



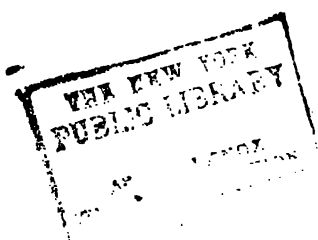
OLD MARKLEY'S SPOOK.

A CHRISTMAS STORY OF MIDDLETOWN.

IT WAS a cold, blustry Christmas Eve. South Mountain was white from base to crest and there were drifts in the road from the Mountain House to Middletown. The usual loafers were congregated about Poffinberger's fire in the City Hotel and mine host had just added a lusty stick to the blazing heap.



THE VALLEY HOTEL, MIDDLETOWN.



"They've seen old Markley again on the mountain," observed one of the group, resuming the conversation that had dragged for some time.

The landlord turned rather suddenly.

"Hey, what's that?" he cried. "Seen Old Markley, eh?"

"That's what they say."

"Who says so?"

"Nelse Remsburg says that Andy Grossnickle told him that—"

"I see," interrupted Poffinberger, or "Poff" as he was usually called. "That's the old story. Somebody says that somebody else told him that the other man saw old Markley's spook. This ghost business is getting rather stale, boys."

"Well, Nelse is pretty reliable."

"But he gets his information second hand. It won't do. When I see old Markley I'll believe it and not before," and Poffinberger tilted his chair against the wall and half closed his eyes.

One by one the loafers quitted the cosy place to wade through the drifts to their respective homes until but one was left, a gaunt fellow who lived near Koogle's bridge. Dan Sinn had no particular occupation. He fell out with labor early in life and was wont to spend his time at Poffinberger's, as the landlord, finding him a boon companion, now and then shared the contents of his bar with him.

Dan and the landlord sat together in the little room till eleven o'clock.

"What was that?" exclaimed Sinn, as the stroke of a bell broke the stillness of the hour.

"It's the wind in the Lutheran steeple."

"Never heard it ring the bell before. Sounded pretty spooklike, eh, Poff?"

"Spook? Nothing! Wonder if Jake Gaver expected me to believe that Markley fake?"

Sinn did not reply. The bell tapped again in ghostly tones.

"It's a thundering good night for spooks anyhow," he remarked in a half whisper, "and it's Christmas Eve at that."

"Yes, and I'm dry," replied Poffinberger, leaving the wall.

In a moment he came back with a generous supply of his favorite "Mountain Dew" and he and Dan drank to the Christmas so near at hand.

"You'll stay here tonight, Dan," said the landlord. "A four-horse team couldn't make the creek through the drifts."

"That's right, I might go over the culvert, you know."

"If you keep up the fire you can have the robes in the corner over there," and Mr. Sinn allowed that that was much better than going home.

The precious pair sat up till half-past eleven when, after replenishing the fire, Poffinberger bade his companion good-night and slipped away.

"The one team out," said he, "won't come in any more tonight. It will probably put up at Hagan's, so you won't be disturbed, Dan."

The landlord considerably left a bottle and a glass in a convenient corner for his guest who eyed them wistfully as footsteps went up the stairs.

"It's funny," mused the happy Mr. Sinn, "how old Markley's ghost bobs up every Christmas. I don't understand it, but I'm no believer and I never let a spook frighten me," and he poured out another whiff of "Mountain Dew."

When the old clock on the wall near the fire banged twelve, Dan opened his eyes half dreamily and went back to slumberland.

About an hour later he awoke suddenly and nervously put on more fuel. The wind was high and the snow was

putting white and weird patches on the windows. Sinn watched them a little while and then crept back to his couch.

Some time afterwards he was sitting bolt upright in his bed with his hearing doubly acute and his eyes astare.

The latch of the back door was making a strange, uncanny noise. It was just that sort of sound a ghost would make and Sinn's hair began to perform all sorts of antics.

What if old Markley had really come to Middletown? The thought was horrifying.

Mr. Sinn held what little breath he had left and clutched the covering with quaking hands.

At last the door opened a trifle and what Dan saw made him leave his couch with the agility of a jumping-jack. He saw the half of a figure robed in ghostly white and back of it he thought he saw another similarly clad.

There was a bolt from the room and up the staircase went the man from Koogle's bridge. On the upper floor he pounded on a door while his voice let out accents of fright.

"Poff! Poff! For Heaven's sake, get up! Old Markley's down below!"

A half-smothered voice came from within: "Wha—what's that?"

"Old Markley!" cried Sinn.

"The—devil!" exclaimed Poffinberger, opening the door. "You're scared, Dan. Too much 'Mountain Dew', I see."

"Hang me if I've touched it. He's the most terrible Santa Claus that ever came to Middletown. And he's downstairs now."

"Pish!" bravely ejaculated the landlord. "We'll see about this spook business."

"There's two of him; two old Markleys."

Mr. Poffinberger descended the stairs closely followed by the unnerved Mr. Sinn. The landlord carried a heavy hickory stick, while his companion wished for a whole battery of artillery.

The door below was opened with the utmost caution. There was no one in the main room. The fire was crackling on the hearth though it had burned quite low and the clock was ticking in the Christmas morning.

"I told you so, no ghost here," said the landlord, over his shoulder.

"But I saw it," chatteringly persisted Mr. Sinn.

"I swear to gracious—"

At that moment the door which communicated with the barroom opened and both Poffinberger and Sinn went against the wall.

The next second two white-clad objects came in sight. They looked like the sheeted dead and just then, to add to the solemnity of the scene, the church bell tapped weirdly again.

One of the ghosts glided to where the bottle had been left and a long, thin hand filled the glass. The two men at the wall looked as white as the robes of the Christmas guests.

What their thoughts were—if they had any at that moment—will never be known.

The apparition slowly lifted the glass to unseen lips.

"A Merry Christmas, Mr. Poffinberger! A Merry Christmas, Mr. Sinn!" came sepulchraly from beneath the mask. "I'm old Markley, murdered years ago, and it's very dry where I've been."

The "Mountain dew" disappeared amid the most profound silence, the spectre put the glass down with a ghostly wave of the hand, the second ghost opened the back door and in another moment the pair against the

"Lock the door, Poff! for God's sake!" groaned Mr. Sinn. "Don't let 'em come back."

Poffinberger staggered across the room and threw the bolt, then fell against the door with a gasp. Mr. Sinn was speechless with terror.

The wind shook the old windows of the hotel and the snow pounded the panes like mad.

"I'd go home if I could," gasped Dan. "It was old Markley, for sure."

Poffinberger, after a sip at the bottle, dropped limp into a chair. For ten minutes neither said a word.

"Dan," said the landlord at last. "It was awful, wasn't it?" But I'd like to know how old Markley could be two, hang me if I wouldn't."

"Ghosts can do anything, Poff," was the reply.

The rest of the night two silent men kept vigil in the old hotel. The Christmas morning dawned bright and beautiful. The snow fairly glistened on South Mountain. Poffinberger opened the back door and looked out. There were no tracks in the fleecy covering of white.

After a visit to his liquor department, mine host came back with a mystified expression:

"Dan," said he, "old Markley must have been awful dry. There's a gallon of my best 'Mountain Dew' missing."

"Eh?" was the reply. "I expect spooks have a hankering in that direction as well as other folks. I'm going to join a temperance society, Poff, and I'll never pass another Christmas Eve in Midletown."



THE MEADOWS OF CATOCTIN.

The meadows of Catoctin, how beautiful they shine
When the bee is in the clover and the bloom is on the
vine,
When the bright dew shines like silver on the gently
waving grass,
And the quail her mate is calling in the hoary mountain
pass;
One by one the herd is straying to the pastures rich
and sweet
With the bells that tinkle, tinkle where the sun and
ripples meet,
And the golden rod is growing and the morning glories
run
In the meadows of Catoctin, sparkling in the summer
sun.

O, the orchards of Catoctin, set upon an hundred hills
With the azure skies above them and beneath the laugh-
ing rills,
Where the peaches and the apples hang in ever-tempting
spheres,
And the red and luscious cherries form the harvests of
the years;
First the pretty apple blossoms seem to clothe the hills
in white,
And the crimson of the peach trees fill the viewer with
delight,
And the sly and prying urchins to the orchard hie away,
And their pockets fill with apples in the gloaming of the
day.

The brooklets of Catoctin! how gleesomely they run—
Dancing now among the shadows, gleaming in the glorious sun,
With the silvery fishes leaping on the ripples clear and cool,
And the wistful boy a-watching as he trudges on to school;
Winding round the lifting mountain, shining 'neath the wooded ridge,
For a moment cast in shadow as they dart beneath the bridge,
Making music for the people as they ever onward flow
Bearing Maryland's tuneful anthems to the lands devoid of snow.

O the blossoms of Catoctin, blue and yellow, red and white,
Opening in the dewy morning, closing gently in the night,
Filling all the air with gladness as they gently smile and nod,
Hiding with their matchless glories the fresh and yielding sod.
The roses and the daisies, how they softly bend and blow
And the buttercups that greet you when has passed the latest snow,
How the richly crimson poppies fleck the fields that stretch afar
And the honeysuckle blossoms, O how beautiful they are!

The fair homes of Catoctin, O how cosy and how sweet!
Away from all the bustle of the ever-crowded street,
Where the skylark seeks the clover and the spring is gushing clear
And contentment, without envy, fills the ever-rolling year;
Who would not by Catoctin pass his little life away?

Who would not, through its paradise contented be to
stray,
With the mountains circling round it and the sunshine
always fair
And the fragrance of its blossoms hanging heavy on the
air?

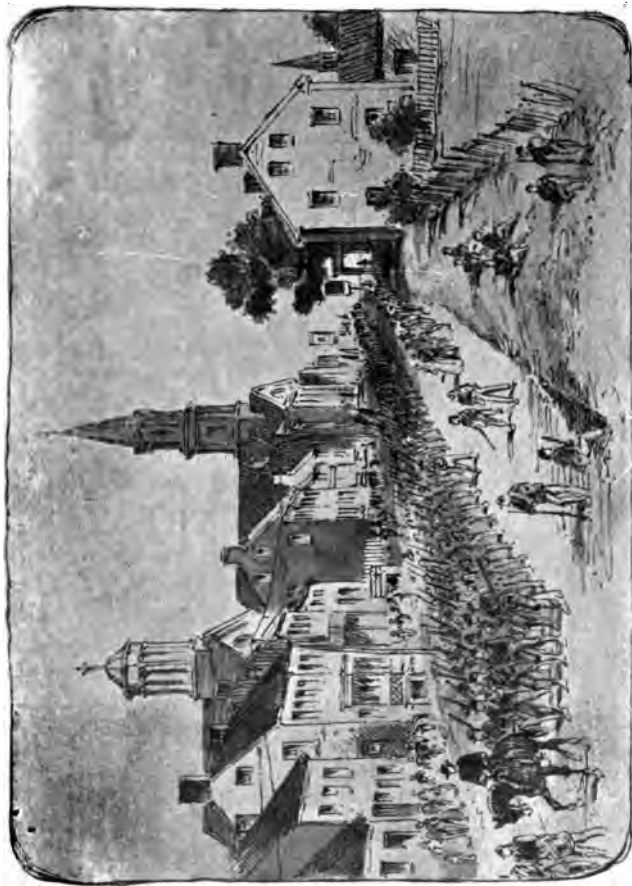


THE VALLEY IN TIME OF WAR.

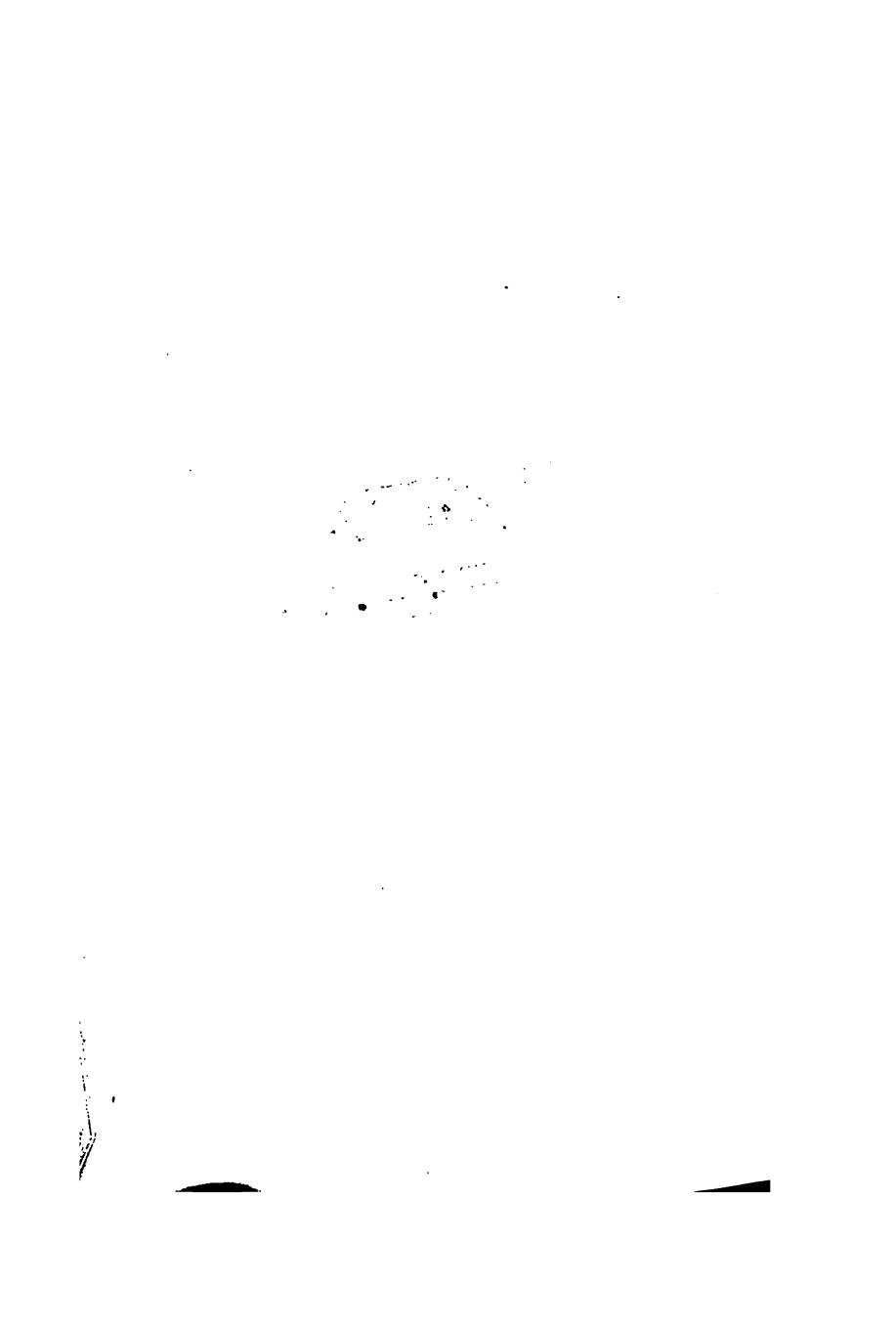
THERE are living yet in Middletown Valley and elsewhere many people who remember the exciting events which that lovely section of Maryland passed through during the great Civil War. At the outbreak of hostilities, and for some time thereafter, no one imagined that an armed force would pass the mountain barriers, much less that the grass of the Valley would become crimsoned with the blood of the brave.

Maryland had been kept in the Union through the strenuous efforts of her loyal sons, though many of her stalwart youth had linked their fortunes with the "stars and bars." The beautiful Catocin sang its way to the sea through scenes of peace, skirting the base of the hills in its serpentine windings and darting in and out the piney groves like squirrels at play. The sturdy farmer sowed and reaped, hauled his produce over the mountain behind his belled teams and mayhap pitied the less favored sections of the country through which the god of war unmercifully strode. The bells of Middletown called the people to prayer as they had done for years, with nothing to forecast the time when sacred temples of the Great Jehovah should run with blood.

This holy calm was not to last. The summer of 1862



ARMY OF POTOMAC, PASSING THROUGH MIDDLETOWN, SEPTEMBER 13th, 1862.



was closing when the first war cloud tipped the glowing crest of the Catoctin range. At first it was no larger than a man's hand, but as it advanced it increased and from it darted the forked lightning of conflict and the thunder of battle. One day a horseman drew rein where now stand the clustered homes of Brad-dock. He was a young man, fair to look upon, like Absalom of old, the scion of a Virginia family that could trace its line back to the days of the cavaliers. In fact he looked like a cavalier himself,—his figure was perfect, his face moulded like a woman's, his eyes large, lustrous and of a deep blue; and his dark hair swept gracefully downward till it touched his ample shoulders. Booted and spurred was he, sworded and pistoled, and he sat his horse like a young Murat come back from the Napoleonic wars.

This youthful soldier was the advance courier of General Lee's army. His companions were toiling over the hot and dusty pike from Frederick, from which they had been driven by the legions in blue. As he gazed across the valley which stretched far away beneath him his thoughts flitted back to the vale of the Shenandoah, his home. Yet he inwardly confessed that here was a paradise as fair as the one he had left. War, as yet, had not marred its beauty. Before him rose the wooded cone of "the Old South," far to his left he noted the gap where the Potomac, cleaving the mountain barrier in some remote age, had found the gentler stream which the Indian had christened the Shenandoah. It was the season of the apple and the peach, the former with its russet hue, the latter with its crimson blush.

Perhaps he thought of the hungry men climbing the mountain behind him, men in tatters of gray, half shoeless and "bearded like the pard," all veterans of battle and each with his musket at his shoulder. They had told him in Frederick that beyond the mountain was a

valley that literally flowed with milk and honey, an Eden which had not been cursed by the coming of the serpent. The young Virginian took one long look; he drank in the beauties of this new "Vale of Cashmere," then wheeled his steed and dashed down the slope.

"It's Paradise, boys!" he cried to the first ranks he met and a cheer went up from an hundred throats.

In the sunshine of that memorable September day the Confederate army gained the summit of the range. Ten thousand men looked and admired, but thought mainly of something to eat. Down through the streets of Middletown surged the warriors of the Confederacy. "Stonewall" Jackson for the first and last time spurred his old sorrel over the flinty way. Mingled with the tread of infantry was the clatter of sabers and the grinding of artillery wheels. War had at last come to the Valley.

It did not take the Confederates long to discover that they were in "the enemy's country." What few inhabitants that were to be seen looked coldly on. There were no cheers, no welcomes of any kind. The Old Valley was loyal. For hours the waves of gray pressed westward; they climbed the mountain, followed by the billows of blue which pressed hard after the Southern quarry. Soon upon the slope of "the Old South" shot out a puff of grayish smoke, then another and another till the whole mountain trembled.

Of the battle the anxious inhabitants of the Valley saw little. They knew more about it later on when the blood-dripping ambulances rattled over the stony pike and deposited their ghastly burdens where the songs of God had risen through fifty years of peace. It was then that the women of Middletown found work of which they had never dreamed. They went among the shambles of battle, nursed the wounded, bathed the fevered *foreheads* of the victims of war and caught the last mes-

sages for loved ones far away. All prayed that they had seen the last vestiges of war, but it was not to be.

Less than a year later that same army in gray,—or what was left of it—came back. It was led by the same indomitable Lee, but Jackson had fallen at Chancellorsville and many of its men slept in unknown graves on the banks of the Antietam. The trail this time led to Gettysburg. Hard upon the heels of the Southern legions pressed the men of Meade, cheered to the echo by the people of the Summer-kissed Valley. The rumble of the great conflict that has immortalized Round Top and Cemetery Ridge was borne by the breezes over the mountain chain to listening ears in Middletown. This time War was knocking at other gates than theirs.

The Gettysburg campaign was the last that poured armed men into the Valley if we except the money-hunt of Early. Henceforth the Valley was to rest in peace; its harvests were to be gathered in security, its orchards to yield their golden fruit without the picking by the men of Mars. Once more Catoctin flowed "unvexed to the sea" and the circling mountains were not to tremble beneath the throes of battle. The god Thor was hammering away in the Wilderness and the hosts of Sherman were treading down the cotton fields of Georgia.

Such, in brief, was the experience of Middletown Valley during the Civil War. Of the many incidents of the two invasions, tragic, humorous and pathetic, I need not speak. They would fill a volume of greater scope than this. Fortunate indeed was the Valley that it saw no more of the war than it did. It had seen enough. The farmer went back to his plow, now and then to turn up ghastly reminders of the gigantic conflict, while throughout the lovely expanse the daisies bloomed in luxuriant profusion as if to hide forever the crimson scars of battle.

WHEN BETTY CAME TO MIDDLETOWN.

When Betty came to Middletown in flounces and brocade,
Away back in the good old days, O, what a stir she made!
Full many a heart beat pit-a-pat among the ardent
beaux

And many a belle some faces made at Betty dear, I
know;

The mountain winds blew softly thro' her strands of
raven hair,

For Betty was a country maid, the daisies not more fair,
And to the dance in Koogle's barn beside Catocin's flow,
The country flocked to see her trip the light fantastic toe.

When Betty came to Middletown, when grandmama was
young,

She had a place in every eye, her name on every tongue,
She rode her horse so gallantly and oft the wanton wind
Played havoc with her tresses fair that floated out be-
hind;

Her stockings and her furbelows, they were an envious
sight,

The shoes upon her little feet seemed crazy with delight,
And when she reined her palfrey in before the old hotel,
A dozen beaux were there to help and not a single belle.

When Betty came to Middletown to buy a gingham dress
The clerks, for making love, could hardly wait on her, I
guess,

They often gave a yard too much, but this was no sur-
prise,

For they never saw the scissors, only Betty's dancing
eyes;

And when she left the village store she left behind a
smile,

That lingered in a captive heart till she was gone a
mile,
And down the valley pike she flew and up the stony hill,
To leap to earth at last before her father's little mill.

When Betty came to Middletown she left no heart be-
hind
For she was love and fancy free as is the mountain wind,
She laughed at Cupid's whisperings, but then, alas! one
day
Adown the church's aisle she walked so beautiful and
gay;
Her lover was a mountaineer, a stalwart fellow he,
Who came somewhere from Burkittsville, a bride-groom
six-foot three;
The beaux and belles in silence watched until it was all
o'er;
And Betty sweet to Middletown unguarded came no
more.



THE MARKED LETTER.

A TRUE STORY OF MIDDLETOWN.

I WISH to state at the beginning of this story that it is true in every essential particular. There may be living today in the valley people who heard it from the lips of parents familiar with the facts as for years after the events narrated below it was a subject for discussion and comment. I have not at hand sufficient data to enable me to state accurately the par-

ticular year that witnessed the episode of the marked letter, but suffice that more than three-score and ten have passed and all the actors concerned in the incident have gone to their reward.

One day in midsummer a high official connected with the general postoffice department at Washington summoned an inspector into his presence.

"Sheldon," said the official, "something seems to be wrong between Frederick and Hagerstown, Maryland. Valuable letters have lately been lost in the mails and I have been deluged with complaints. Packages are not disturbed, but valuable letters have been purloined and seemingly by some one connected with the service."

Inspector Sheldon was a man of few words and a good listener. Ready at all times to obey the commands of his chief, he had gained for himself the commendation of the Department and his pay had lately been increased.

"You will proceed at once to the scene of trouble," continued the high official, "and use every means in your power to put an end to these depredations. The Department cannot submit to these annoyances which subject it to ridicule. It looks to you, therefore, for relief."

Mr. Sheldon arose and picked up his hat. His deep blue eyes sparkled with eagerness. He liked his calling and nothing suited him better than to be on the trail of some mail robber. Not long after the above interview Mr. Isaac Sheldon arrived in Frederick. He put up at the leading hotel and represented himself as a gentleman interested in Frederick County lands. It was before the day of the railroad and the mails were carried by horseback and stage over the mountains. This was slow service compared to the rapid transmission of mails at the present day, but while it was slow it was nevertheless sure.. The inspector by degrees became acquainted with *the postpaster* of Frederick. He did not reveal his

identity to this official until he had convinced himself of his honesty. Then he suddenly acquainted the postmaster with his mission and announced his determination of getting at the bottom facts of the missing mail in that particular locality.

"I cannot conceive of such a crime in this vicinity," exclaimed the Frederick postmaster. "It seems incredible, Mr. Sheldon. The postmaster at Middletown, Mr. Richmond, is above suspicion, while those at Boonsboro and Hagerstown respectively, I place in the same catalogue."

"Well, something's wrong," answered the mild-mannered Sheldon. "I wouldn't be here if everything was straight. The head of the Department is worried almost to death over the state of affairs existing on this mountain route, and I have orders to go ahead and find the culprit."

"Good luck to you, sir, and if I can be of any assistance, draw on me."

Sheldon thanked the postmaster cordially and hinted that he considered himself capable of transacting the business in hand without outside help.

The Middletown postoffice at this time was kept in the old Wolf property on East Main street. The building, well remembered by many of our readers, was demolished in 1903, though it had withstood the storms of many years. It was a one-story, one-roomed building, built of logs—a very substantial affair of the early days—and for a long time it was the postoffice in which the slow-going mails were received and dispatched.

The mails of that period were carried between Baltimore and Hagerstown in the lumbering stages that bowled over the turnpike with the driver elevated on the outside seat while he cracked his whip over the heads of the horses. The stages were generally well filled with passengers who had ample time to survey the mag-

nificent vista of mountain and valley as they were carried along, and as these passengers were usually a jolly set the little black bottle circulated freely among them.

When he was ready for operations, Sheldon, the inspector, procured some banknotes which he carefully marked and placed the same in a letter which he addressed to himself at Hagerstown. He saw this letter deposited in the mail sack at Frederick and had the sack locked in his presence. He did not lose sight of the sack for a single minute, but saw it placed in the stage in which he seated himself destined for Hagerstown.

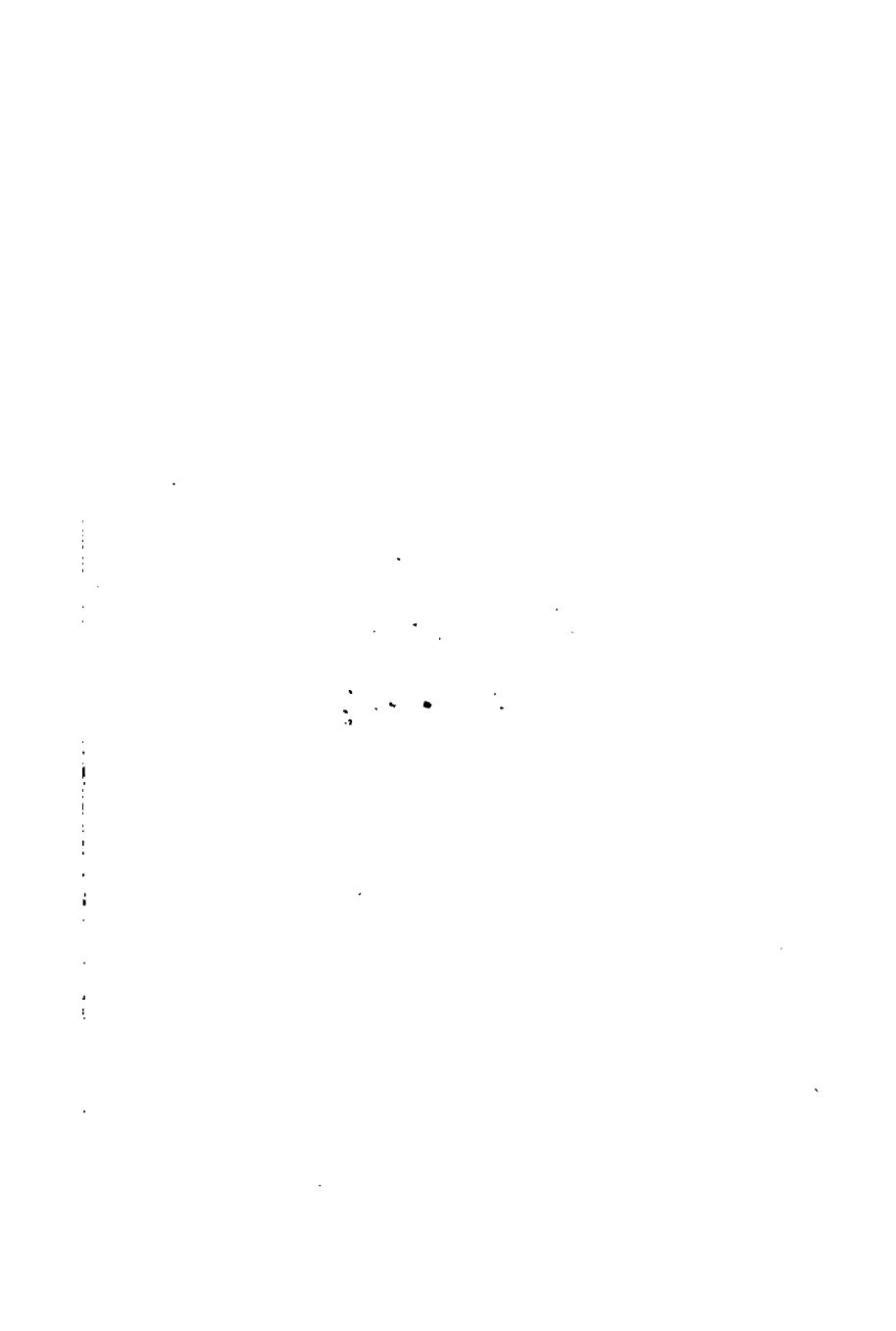
On the seat opposite him sat a young girl of prepossessing appearance. She was vivacious and captivating and soon became the life of the party. Nancy Huffer from the first cast sheep's eyes at Sheldon, who was a good-looking man of thirty, and she seemed to be debating in her mind whether he was married or single.

As the heavy old stage turned an abrupt bend in the road near Braddock Heights, a deep rut caused by recent rains caused it to topple and upset and in a moment the whole party of passengers was in a pell-mell condition. Miss Nancy improved the occasion by falling into Sheldon's arms and blushed captivately as he snatched a kiss from her ruddy cheeks. In a little while the stage was righted and headed once more for Middletown.

The postoffice was reached in due time and Richmond, the postmaster, came out to receive the mail bag from the driver. The moment the keen-eyed inspector caught sight of Richmond he began to study him. The Middletown postmaster, to all outward appearances, was as mild mannered a man as ever cut a throat or scuttled a ship. He was a tailor by profession and worked at his trade when he was not serving Uncle Sam. While the *mail* was being changed Sheldon sauntered around, tak-



OLD MIDDLETOWN POSTOFFICE.



ing in the sights and doing the agreeable to Miss Nancy Huffer. The mail was changed at last and the stage rumbled out of town toward the mountain.

"You've got a nice postmaster in Middletown," commented Sheldon to a passenger who had just joined the party.

"Mr. Richmond? A fine gentleman, sir, and faithful."

"He looks it."

"And he can make a coat to perfection. He made my wedding suit and I wore it on two occasions."

At this Miss Huffer tittered a little and stole a glance at the inspector.

"Good, honest officials are the pride of the Government," observed Sheldon, "and I'm glad Middletown possesses such a jewel."

At this point the subject was dropped and the inspector went into a discussion of the country, assisted by the Middletown passenger who was booked for Hagerstown.

When the coach halted in front of the Boonsboro post-office Sheldon alighted and went in. He met the postmaster at the door. A shrewd observer of men, Isaac Sheldon surveyed the man from head to foot. That he was honest the inspector saw at a glance. Honesty looked from his eyes. Stepping behind the counter, where the postmaster was changing the mail, the inspector laid his hand on the official's sleeve.

"I am a postoffice detective," said he. "You will let me see you change the mail."

"Show me your authority first."

This Sheldon did in a moment and the Boonsboro official complied with the demand. The decoy letter was not in the sack!

"It's useless for me to proceed to Hagerstown," Sheldon said to himself. "I think I've run the quarry down."

When everything was ready for a continuance of the trip Mr. Sheldon announced that he felt ill and said he

would tarry in Boonsboro till the next day. This announcement did not accord with Miss Nancy's feelings and, her sympathies enlisted, she prescribed some simple remedies which she said would bring the sick man around all right. She knew an old woman a few miles away who could cure Mr. Sheldon in a few moments for she had wonderful powers, but the deep black eyes of the mountain beauty for once lost their persuasiveness for Sheldon refused to resume the journey.

Toward the middle of the afternoon the inspector secured a rig in which to drive back to Middletown. He would have preferred to have had Miss Nancy for company, but business of startling importance forced him to make the journey alone.

Driving up in front of the Middletown postoffice he threw the halter over the post in front of the building and presented himself suddenly to Richmond.

"Back again?" exclaimed the postmaster. "You must have changed your mind, sir."

"I have," answered Sheldon with a smile. "By the way, Mr. Richmond, when changing the mail, did you notice a rather bulky letter addressed to Mr. Isaac Sheldon, Hagerstown?"

"I never notice private addresses while changing mails," replied Richmond somewhat indignantly.

"No? Then, Mr. Richmond, I place you under arrest. I am Isaac Sheldon, a postoffice detective."

The tailor-postmaster swallowed hard, but soon recovered his equanimity.

"You don't think I purloined your letter, I hope?" he exclaimed. "I'm an honest man, sir—"

"Admitted for sake of argument," broke in the inspector. "Nevertheless, Mr. Richmond, you will consider yourself in custody."

At this the Middletown postmaster waxed indignant. The detective was coolness itself. Mr. Richmond was

hailed before a magistrate in whose presence Sheldon began to search him. All went very well and Richmond was gloating over his victory when Sheldon's hand fell upon his right shoulder.

"Your garment here seems to be well padded," he observed.

At this Richmond went pale and before he could protest, his coat was stripped from his back. The keen-edged knife of the detective ripped open the seam and with a groan Richmond sank into a chair, for Sheldon had just drawn from the slit half a dozen crisp bills upon which were his own private marks.

Caught red-handed, Richmond could do nothing but confess. He had fallen into the hands of the law and disgrace was before him. The upshot of the whole matter was that after Richmond was released by the authorities he shook the dust of Middletown from his feet, went west, became postmaster of a small town in Missouri, and it is said, eventually entered the ministry.

A year or so after the occurrences narrated above a handsome man came through Middletown making inquiries for the whereabouts of a Miss Nancy Huffer. He was directed to a pretty farm house on the other side of the mountain where he was met at the door by Miss Nancy herself who proceeded to make herself as agreeable as ever.

"I'm really sorry you took Mr. Richmond," exclaimed the pert young miss one day to the inspector.

"Really?" was the reply. "Well, I'm here to take Miss Nancy if she is willing."

There was a blush and a little laugh for the Maryland beauty, like the renowned Mr. Barkis, was "willin'," and she became Mrs. Sheldon by the usual ceremony.

THE OLD ELM.

[The old elm stood just inside the fence on the north side of the pike, on the level about 100 feet west of the old culvert, at the west edge of town.]

'Tis done—the cruel, wanton act,
The noble tree lies low;
No more its sturdy boughs shall bend
Beneath the virgin snow.

Oh, it hath sheltered grandsires gone,
There we in childhood played;
The weary traveler hailed with glee
Its cool, refreshing shade.

How oft beneath its foliage,
Upon the verdant sod,
The Christian hath in secret held
Communion with his God.

How oft the red man thither stole
To woo his dusky love;
Bright flowers blooming there beneath,
And lofty boughs above.

But they are gone—those brave red men,
Life is too short a lease—
How oft around the tree hath passed
The calumet of peace.

For years it stood, reminding us
Of times forever gone.
Revered by all for mem'ry's sake,
By all? Yes, all save one!

Why did he not the landmark spare?
Why deal the fatal blow?
The Elm, beneath the touch of Time,
Was crumbling sure but slow.

O, rude the hand that struck to earth
The venerable tree;
And hard the heart that could not love
It for old memories.

I loved it from my youth, and now
I sorrow for its doom;
I hoped that it would live when I
Sleep in the narrow tomb!

But no! the cruel hand of man
Put forth must lay it low;
I would that from its spreading roots
Another Elm might grow.



THE HERO OF HIGHLAND.

OF THE THOUSANDS who have heard of Barbara Freitchie, the heroine of Frederick, none have read the story of George Blessing, of this valley, known as the "Hero of Highland." It will bear telling, for he is one of the forgotten heroes of the Civil War.

Blessing was past three and ten years when Lee and his Confederates entered Maryland in the Summer of 1863. The old man lived at the foot of Catoctin Mountain, north of Middletown, where he was passing through

the sunset of a grand old age. He was intensely loyal and abominated the sight of a gray coat. After the battle of South Mountain in the autumn of 1862, he picked up half a dozen muskets on the field and took them to his home. "They may come handy some day," said old Blessing, and his words were a prophecy.

So he lived quietly in his mountain home, read his Bible daily and kept posted on the events of the war. When the rebel army crossed the Potomac the people became greatly excited, all apparently but Blessing. He seemed the only cool-headed man in the valley. As rumors of the foe's advance spread far and wide he ordered his horses locked up in the big barn, and with the assistance of his son Tom, a boy of sixteen, loaded the six muskets, showing that the old man meant business.

One day an excited neighbor rushed into the Blessing homestead and cried out that the rebels were at hand. "We'll have prayers first," said old Blessing, and ordering Pinky, the old colored servant, to blow the horn for the assembly of the family, the Bible was taken from its shelf and the old man read the 91st Psalm. After this, all knelt down and the old man implored the God of Battles to shield the family and sustain the cause of the Union.

"Now, Tom, take two muskets and follow me," old Blessing said. "If the Phillistines come, we'll show them that Marylanders can fight."

Father and son proceeded to the barnyard where the boy was stationed in a corncrib while the white-haired sire sheltered himself behind a shock of fodder. They did not have to wait long for the enemy. Over the hills and up the lane they came, a squad of rebel cavalrymen. They had sent word several days ahead that they intended to teach old Blessing a lesson in civility, and they had come for that purpose.

Not seeing the old man behind the corn shock the

troopers rode straight for the barn. One stalwart fellow cursed when he found the door locked and proceeded to break the lock.

"Halt!" rang out old Blessing's voice, "the first man who breaks that lock dies like a dog!"

The big rebel and his companions replied with laughs of derision. At the lock the trooper went again. Suddenly a puff of smoke shot above the corn and the lock-breaker's arm fell shattered at his side. The squad wheeled and fled and Blessing covered the captain as he rode away, and he fell dead from his horse at the report of the old man's musket. The day waned with old Blessing still holding the fort. He deserted the corn shock and took up another position where he was concealed by a water trough in a clump of trees. The rebel troopers came back for vengeance as if they hadn't had enough of the old fighter.

In a stern voice Blessing commanded the enemy to halt, but as they refused and came on, the musket spoke again and another "Johnny" dropped ~~from~~ his saddle. This exasperated the troopers. They were getting more of old Blessing than they had bargained for. At last they hit upon a happy idea. They captured a few of Blessing's neighbors and sent them ahead to warn him what would happen unless he surrendered. But old Blessing was just beginning to fight. He halted his neighbors and gave them a taste of the old man's cleverness with a musket. Old Blessing was a dangerous proposition to tackle. Still they were loth to ride back and confess that one man, and an old one at that, had whipped the whole company.

Help came at last. Suddenly a detachment of Cole's Cavalry (Union) came in sight and the rebels raised the siege and rode away. It was discovered that they had buried their dead captain, while the wounded Johnny had been taken care of by Blessing. There's no telling

how many men would have dropped if Cole's men had not come to the rescue. As he had a battery of muskets and plenty of ammunition, and was a good shot, he would undoubtedly have given some more of his enemies their eternal discharges if they had pressed him. After the little battle old Blessing went back to his house, read a psalm and had family prayer. When a New York newspaper gave a glowing account of his fight and called him "the hero of the Highlands," old Blessing exclaimed: "Pooh! it was only a little skirmish, not worth talking about."

But his name and fame went abroad just the same, as the man who checked the advance of Lee's army among the hills of Maryland.



WHO HAS NOT HEARD?

Who has not heard of the Vale of Catoctin,
Where long is the summer and lingers the bee,
And the wild roses bloom and the daisies in beauty
Nod by its rivers that sing to the sea?
O, who loves it not who had roamed in raptures
Where the oak spreads its shade and the tow'ring pines
Hold for a moment the soft mountain breezes
Ere they hasten to toy with the blossoming vines?

Who has not heard in the depths of the gloaming
The tinkle of bells as the herd wanders home,
And who has not gazed with delight on this picture—
Catoctin asleep 'neath its star-studded dome?

I've harked to the praises of beautiful regions,
The Heart of the Tyrol, the Vale of Cashmere,
But my thoughts like a bird to the Vale of Catoctin
Fly thro' the twilight enchanting and clear.

O, who, far away, has not longed to revisit
The spot where his childhood was passed long ago,
Where the dew sparkles bright on the summertime roses,
And the mocking bird sings by Catoctin's sweet flow?
Encircled by mountains that lift to the azure,
Endeared to the truant who seeks other skies,
The Vale of Catoctin in garments of beauty,
Appeals to a love that on earth never dies.

O, who would not dwell in this paradise lovely?
Who would not sleep here when his life race is run—
Where Nature spreads far her soft carpet of blossoms
And the creek is agleam in the beams of the sun?
Yes, take the famed valleys beyond the broad waters,
The gardens of Europe, immortal and rare,
The Land of Cathay and the spice-scented islands,
But leave me the Vale of Catoctin so fair.



AN UNINVITED SANTA CLAUS.

A CHRISTMAS STORY OF THE EVERHART SCHOOL.

IT WAS a wondrously beautiful Christmas night when Mrs. Ridlemoser opened her door and looked out. The ground was covered with snow, not deep, but enough to afford good sleighing and the little particles of white glittered in the silvery beams of

a full moon. Since time makes many changes it is difficult now to mark the site of the Riddlemoser domicile, as it disappeared years ago. Suffice it to say that it stood on a rise not far from the old Everhart schoolhouse now one of the landmarks of Middletown Valley.

Mrs. Riddlemoser was in doubt as to whether she was a grass widow or the genuine article. Two very important events in her life had happened on Christmas. In the first place it was her natal day, and secondly, on the same anniversary, ten years before the opening of our story, her husband, Joseph, had disappeared. It was a cold day and the family fire needed replenishing. Mrs. R. suggested that her Hege lord, who quite early in his life had fallen out with work, might visit the woodpile and secure some fuel. Mr. Riddlemoser did not take kindly to the suggestion, but departed with a muttered imprecation, and instead of visiting the woodpile, disappeared over the hill toward Middletown.

That was the last Mrs. R. had seen of her husband. Not a letter had been received and as the Christmases came and went she was in grave doubt as to her matrimonial standing. She was still on the sunny side of forty, and if she was only sure—but why speculate? Joseph might turn up some day, and Hannah Riddlemoser always declared with emphasis that if he ever came back he should become acquainted with the woodpile.

The Riddlemoser household consisted of the mother and one daughter, Polly, who had hopes of catching Harlan Bittle, the young man who taught the children of the district in the Everhart schoolhouse. On the particular Christmas night when Mrs. Riddlemoser looked out upon the snow, some Christmas "doings" were to take place at Everhart's. Miss Polly was the *proposer* of the affair, and some jealous ones said it was *solely* for the purpose of fastening the chains of her

wiles about the young master. However that might be, the suggestion took like wildfire and a beautiful tree was set up in the schoolhouse.

The interior of the structure was tastefully decorated with evergreens from valley and mountain and in the mingled beams of lamps and candles the scene was one of much beauty. Mr. Bittle had consented to enact the role of Santa Claus, probably at Polly's suggestion, and the night had come.

When Mrs. Riddlemoser shut the door and turned back into the house she confronted her daughter arrayed for the celebration.

"You do look beautiful, Polly," said the mother. "How I wish——."

She paused, for she was about to speak the name of her runaway lord, a name which had not fallen from her lips since his departure.

"Yes, I do wish pop could see me," cried the young girl as she admired her figure in the mirror, which hung just below an old print of Henry Clay, "I wonder where pop is tonight?"

Something came up in the mother's throat just then, and she turned away without answering.

"Mr. Bittle got his Santa Claus fixin's in Frederick," continued the girl. "He got the loveliest mask with a long beard and he told me that when he is dressed as Santa Claus you'd take him for the real article. It's arranged, of course, that he won't reach the schoolhouse till the right time, and when he comes he'll prove the best Santa the district's ever had."

"Harlan, I mean Mr. Bittle, is very ingenious," observed Mrs. Riddlemoser. "I hope you'll get him, Polly, if for nothing else just to beat Sue Poffinbarger."

"Oh, she's got no chance when I'm around, mother. She's too harum-scarum for Harlan Bittle, and then—the family! Why, they saw her grandfather was a Tory."

"Don't tell that around, Polly," admonished Mrs. Riddlemoser. "We've got nothing to crow over when it comes to that. Your own grandfather sided with King George."

This silenced the young girl and she rearranged her "fixin's" while her mother, who was to accompany her to the schoolhouse, got ready for the walk over the well broken path in the snow.

The young teacher lived on the turnpike toward Bolivar, where he had rooms and had announced that he would drive in a sleigh to the schoolhouse. He was quite a favorite in the district, and especially among the gentler sex. There is no telling how many had set their caps for him, for he was deemed a splendid acquisition to any household. He had once been to Philadelphia, not to mention several visits to Baltimore and Washington, and was considered a much-traveled person. In addition to this he was a good singer and his playing on the violin was accounted marvelous.

It was a good mile from the Riddlemoser home to the schoolhouse. Mother and daughter set out well protected from the cold and in time reached the structure.

"I expect Sue Poffinbarger will think herself the whole show tonight," said Polly. "She tried to boss matters when we were arranging the decorations, but I gave her one or two intimations that there were other fish in the ocean. That grandfather business——"

"I hope you didn't mention it," interrupted Polly's mother.

"I just couldn't help it," was the reply.

"What did she say?"

"It seemed to knock her all in a heap," said the girl. "Then, Ann Stottlemeyer, who trains with Sue, spoke up and said perhaps there were others. Just then I let a bunch of cedar fall on their heads and maybe, if the



THE OLD EVERHART SCHOOL HOUSE TWO MILES
WEST OF MIDDLETOWN.

1911

boys hadn't interfered, there'd have been something doing."

"You've got your father's temper, Polly. If he hadn't had a temper ten years ago, we wouldn't have to carry in the winter's wood," and with this allusion to the absconded one, Mrs. Riddlemoser shut up like a clam.

Meantime, not very far away, the chosen Santa Claus was arraying himself for the occasion. His outfit was all that could be desired. A more ideal Santa Claus had never come down the mountain. Mr. Bittle had spared no expense to array himself as befitted the ceremony in which he was to take such a prominent part. The few adornments he had failed to find in Frederick he picked up in Middletown, where he had invited a few friends to come out to Everhart's Christmas night.

As he finished dressing he picked up a half-opened note lying on the table. A smile flitted across his face, then he put the letter in his pocket carefully, for it was from Miss Poffinbarger, asking him to come to her taffypulling the following Saturday night. If the young tutor had two strings to his bow he was careful not to let Polly know it.

When all was ready he left the house and sprang into the sleigh at the post outside. The horse was well belled, and as he wore his "regalia" he could easily have been taken for a real Santa Claus in the brilliant moonlight. There was one turn in the road which had an evil fame. Some years before, a midnight hold-up and robbery had taken place there, and timid ones either shunned it as much as possible or drove past it with all possible speed.

"Robber's Bend," as the place was called, did not possess much fear for the young teacher and when he reached it he did not increase his gait. He was thinking of his admirable make-up and probably dividing his remaining thoughts between Polly and Sue, when his

horse suddenly slowed up and he heard a strange, rough voice.

When he looked up he beheld a rough-looking man, who held the bridle in one hand, while he leaned toward the sleigh.

"Santa Claus, by Jupiter!" said the unknown, with a chuckle. "Please don't give me any trouble, sir."

Harlan Bittle felt his heart beat against the bars of its cage and his breath seemed to leave him.

"Take 'em off!" commanded the man in the road.

The young teacher demurred to such unwarranted proceedings.

"Take 'em off, I say. You won't, eh?"

The horse was led from the road to a clump of trees and the stranger's hands fell upon the shoulders of the Everhart Santa Claus.

"Who are you?" Bittle managed to stammer.

"Never your mind. I want your fixin's."

"But, sir—"

"See here. Don't you know I'm desperately desperate?"

With this a heavy hand landed in the young teacher's face and he lapsed into unconsciousness. When he came back to life he was lying among the trees, wrapped in his own blankets and bound with some cords that had been taken from the body of the vehicle. It was a tantalizing ending of his Santa Claus role. The sky overhead was studded with stars and there came to his ears from far away the jingling of bells.

In vain he tried to twist out of his bonds. The more exertion he put into the efforts the tighter they became and at last he desisted from very weakness. What had become of the miscreant who had carried off not only the Santa Claus trappings, but horse and sleigh as well, *he did not know.*

"He's worse than a Bedouin chief," thought young Bittle. "I never read of such scoundrellism. Why, the rascal ought to stretch hemp. No, there can't be any Santa Claus at Everhart's tonight, and I'm liable to freeze to death here."

In one respect at least he was mistaken.

A short time after the audacious villainy of that Christmas night a sleigh stopped in the hollow where still stands the old Everhart schoolhouse. A human figure fantastically arrayed as Santa Claus, alighted and looked around.

"Just as I expected," muttered this individual. "He was going to play Kris Kingle in the old schoolhouse."

He surveyed himself in the moonlight and advanced toward the door. Sounds of voices from within reached his ears and the following moment he had thrown wide the portal. The room was filled to completion. The well-garnished Christmas tree occupied the center of an extemporized stage and a cheer greeted the uninvited Santa Claus as he made his way towards it.

The children were delighted and there was a smile of pleasure on Polly Riddlemoser's face.

"Doesn't Harlan make a splendid Santa Claus?" she whispered to her mother who nodded assent.

In another moment the cheat vaulted upon the platform when the structure and Santa Claus, tree and all, were "in one red burial bent." There were screams, cries and shrieks of all kinds. Pandemonium reigned supreme. One or two of the most nervous women thought it proper time to faint and promptly did so. The male spectators rushed forward and dragged Santa Claus from amid the ruin he had wrought. Mrs. Riddlemoser, concerned for the safety of Miss Polly's chosen catch, was among the first on the scene.

As the much-bruised and half-conscious man was pulled from the debris, she gave one look and screamed.

"It's Joe Riddlemoser!"

By this time the white-faced Polly was at her side.

"It's pop!" she cried. "Pop's come back!"

"Hang the rascal!" went up from all parts of the house.

More humane actions were interposed. Despite his protests, the returned prodigal, still decked in the paraphernalia of Christmastide, was jerked upon his feet and hurried from the building. He was thrown rudely into a sleigh and hustled toward the turnpike. A number of stalwart young men trooped behind the vehicle. The cavalcade headed for the Catoctin and a halt was made at Koogle's bridge. One of the number had procured an axe and a hole was speedily cut through the ice.

Mr. Riddlemoser protested with all the vehemence in his power, but the mob was obdurate. He was doused into the icy waters, trappings and all.

"Douse him again!" cried one. "He's a hardshell Baptist and likes water——"

And down the uninvited Santa Claus went again.

When his persecutors finally desisted Joe Riddlemoser was the most forlorn specimen of humanity ever seen in Middletown Valley. He was left on the ice to recover or perish, the mob cared little.

Of course the scenes I have described and the subsequent finding of Harlan Bittle terminated the Christmas exercises at Everhart's, but it was a night long to be remembered. Toward morning a knock sounded on the Riddlemoser door and the uninvited patron saint of Christmas stood before Polly and her mother. He was a sight.

"Joe Riddlemoser," exclaimed the mother. "How could you do it?"

"Can I stay?" moaned the woe-begone man.

"Yes, if you promise to carry in the wood, Joe."

"I'll do anything, Hannah. I'll never be Santa Claus again," and as the shivering wretch dried himself before the fire he looked admiringly at Polly.

"You've grown, gal," he said.

"Yes, pop, and to think it was Harlan you nearly killed."

"Oh, he'll do for next Christmas," was the reply. "Old Catoctin's colder than it used to be. Ugh! I'll have the pneumony next."

"And I'll get Harlan Bittle in spite of Sue Poffinberger, pop," said Polly, which resolution she faithfully carried out, for she was married the next Christmas night in the old schoolhouse in the hollow.



CHRISTMAS IN THE VALLEY.

Christmas in the Valley fair! and o'er the fleecy snow
I hear the bells of Middletown in accents soft and low,
Beneath the stars I see the spires that gleam amid the
night.

And point the weary pilgrim to a land of pure delight;
Ice locked Catoctin softly sleeps 'neath tree and hoary
bridge

And lights that guide old Santa Clause shine on the
whitened ridge,

And down the frosty valley road and thro' the wintry
dells

There come to me the tuneful sounds of laughing Christ-
mas bells.

Christmas in the Valley 'neath the mountain's rugged
crest!

To it how many send their love throughout the glowing
West;
In memory they hear the chimes that rang above the
snow
In the sweet and hold Christmastides of life's loved long
ago;
Upon the hearths of other years the fires of childhood
burn
And thoughts unto the Valley dear this Christmas will
return,
And in the corridors of Time will echo many feet
That trod in cycles that have passed the cherished village
street.

Christmas in the Valley old and snow on Braddock's
brow,
And on the pike from Frederick Town the bells are
jingling now;
I listen in the twilight till unconsciously I say:
"The bells! the bells of Middletown! I hear them far
away!"
They call to me this Christmas with their story sweet
and old,
In ages past to all the world beside the manger told,
When the shepherd kings, a moment putting down the
diadem,
Were guided by the sacred star to dear old Bethlehem.

Christmas in the Valley! where the snow is resting light
Upon God's holy acre where our loved ones sleep tonight,
And the heart, a moment saddened turns to scenes of
childish glee,
For a lot of little faces swarm about the Christmas tree;
Over all I hear the anthems that our cares and sorrows
drown,

I greet the Christmas lights that shine all o'er Middle-
town,
For Santa Claus is coming, I can see his happy face
And I hear him chuckle to himself: "I can't forget this
place."

'Christmas in the Valley dear! may every heart be glad.
May laughter rules the happy hour and not a soul be sad;
I send my richest blessing to the vale so dear to me,
Rejoicing in its Christmastide and round the ladened
tree;

May the bounties of the Father on the cherished Valley
rest.

May all who keep its Christmas by His wondrous love be
blest;

As chimed the bells of Heaven on the birthnight of His
Son.

May Christmas bells in Middletown proclaim, "His will
be done!"

Christmas in the Valley with the holly and the snow!
Christmas in the Valley 'neath the mystic mistletoe;
I catch the sound of music in the white-invested dells,
'Tis the jingle, jingle, jingle of the merry winter bells;
Beneath its coverlet of white Catoctin is at rest,
The trolley scales the mountain, there's a star o'er Brad-
dock's crest;

I see the lights a-shining and I hear the children call,
Oh, 'tis Christmas in the Valley that is dearest to us all!



"A CATOCTIN MYSTERY."

(A STORY OF THE OLD EDMONDS MILL.)

IT WAS back in the late "twenties" when Casper Remsberg, who built and ran what is now known as the Edmonds Mill, south of Middletown, saw a man approaching from the opposite side of the creek. This was not an unusual sight for people, many of them strangers, came to the mill at all hours. On this particular occasion, however, the man had apparently no grist for he was afoot. He was a little man past fifty, as the keen eyes of Remsberg could see, and as he stepped upon the foot-log that spanned the creek just above the ford, the miller saw that one sleeve was empty.

Old Casper stood in the open door of the mill and watched the solitary man until he had crossed the creek when, thinking that he intended taking the road past the mill itself, he withdrew inside. A few minutes later the miller was startled by a human voice and turned to confront the one-armed stranger.

"Good night, sir," said Remsberg in cheery tones. "I am just about to shut down and——"

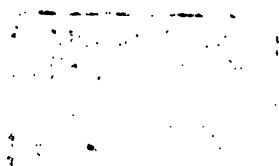
"I've brought no grist," replied the other, "unless you can grind me between your burrs."

"You'd make a sorry meal, I'm thinking," answered Casper, and then he fell to looking the man over from head to foot.

He did not look like a tramp after all. While his garments were not of the best, they were neat, though travel-stained. There was much intelligence in the man's face; his eyes were dark and expressive and a good many gray hairs framed his brow. He cast a hasty



THE OLD EDMONDS MILL. 2½ MILES SOUTH OF
MIDDLETOWN, NOW DISMANTLED.



glance about the mill-room and then turned quickly upon Remsberg.

"Would you have any objection to my bunking here tonight?" he asked.

"In the mill?"

"Why not?" Empty sacks make a downy bed for a foot-sore traveler."

"I'd sooner give you a place in the house," said the miller.

"Nay. I wouldn't put the good wife to any trouble for the world. Give me the sacks, sir, and I'll do the rest."

The miller of the Catocin complied with this request and when he bade the stranger good night he saw him stretched out on a dozen sacks which had been spread on the floor. In those days, when everybody was regarded honest, houses were seldom locked at night, therefore Mr. Remsberg did not turn a key at the mill door when he went away.

He acquainted his wife of his guest and was overheard by a "hand," a half-witted fellow named Bob Sil-kirk, who did the chores of the place and spent his nights eel-fishing in the adjacent stream. Bob opened his eyes to their widest capacity.

He was a secretive fellow who said little, but thought as deeply as he could with his addled brains. The night came on with mutterings of a storm and the old mill loomed dark against the few stars visible in the summer sky.

Bob concluded to give up his eel expedition and turn his attention to the man in the mill. With this end in view he took his station not far from the structure and began his vigils. The gust came and passed on.

It was near midnight when the sleepless half-wit was startled at seeing a light in one of the mill windows. He knew that Casper and his household were asleep and

argued that it was the one-armed man who had produced the light. A large tree with sturdy branches stood almost against the mill and Silkirk was soon in the largest fork. He pushed his way along a limb till he reached the window of the room where the stranger lay.

"I thought so," grinned Bob. "He's a robber, that's what he is."

On the floor of the mill-room with a queer-looking candle between his knees sat the stranger. The burning wick threw a weird light about the place and revealed to the breathless Bob the man's face. If this had been all the half-wit saw he would not have had much to relate, but he saw more than the cobwebbed beams and the unknown's features. The man had picked up a little leathern pack which he had evidently placed under the sacks upon retiring and this he had opened with his one hand.

Bob saw him pour out upon the flood a lot of tiny objects that sparkled in the light. He may have heard of diamonds, but he had never feasted his eyes upon such, still he knew that from the care with which the man handled the "little stones" they must possess some value at least to their owner.

While the watcher in the tree gazed breathless upon this scene he heard the lower mill door opened and shut and the next moment the one-armed man had a companion. The newcomer was a hatchet-faced man at sight of whom the person on the floor nodded and showed some of the glittering objects.

"You've got all of them?" Bob heard the second man exclaim.

"Not one missing," was the reply. "They're worth a King's ransom, don't you think?"

"They'd buy a kingdom," was the reply. "Is our journey to end here?"

"Why not? I can climb like a monkey even if I have

but one hand. The bed of the old wheel is deep. They'll never look there for them."

"Of course not. It's the last place they would look."

With this both men drew close together and examined the shining objects with great interest.

"They'll make a grand wedding present for Katy," said the newcomer.

"Fine! She'll look splendid with the stones on her neck. But she shall not wed any boor from this region."

"Of course not. Nothing short of a prince for Katy."

The one-armed man now fished in the depths of the leathern case and drew forth a little box made apparently of steel. It might have been a jewel case from the way it shone. One by one he dropped the glittering things into this box, closed the lid with a snap and looked pleased. Then he stowed the whole away in his bosom.

"Come now," he said, rising. "Take the light and follow me."

The second man picked up the candle and both started off. This was too much for Bob Silkkirk. His curiosity had reached the high-water mark and in a moment he was quitting his tree. He bounded across the space that separated him from the mill, opened the door cautiously and entered. A dim light told him that the two men had reached the water wheel. Far beneath the axel of the old wheel yawned a dark pit, the sides of which dripped with moisture and was one of the uncanniest places one could imagine. Bob secreted himself behind an unright beam and looked.

He saw that the little door which led into the water shed had been opened. The man with the two good arms stood at the threshold of the pit with the light in his hand. The maimed man was just clambering into the pit itself.

"Hold the light steady, there," Bob heard the one-armed man say. "I've got the eyes of the hoot-owl, you

know. If I didn't have 'em I never would have gotten away with the gems."

For at least twenty minutes Bob Selkirk saw nothing of the man who had evidently lowered himself into the heart of the darkness that lay below the water wheel. The man above held the light steady. At last the head of the one-armed man appeared at the little door. His eyes glittered like a serpent's.

"It's darker than Egypt down there," Bob heard him gasp. "The stones are well set and it took hard work to loosen one. But I've got 'em hid and when the affair has blown over we'll have 'em safe."

"That's good," was the response. "You're a trump, Bennick."

Poor Bob Selkirk did not know what to do. He was so afraid of his discovery that a cold sweat came out on his forehead and he could scarcely keep his feet. And he knew that to be caught there where he was meant death. However, he kept his post and saw the two men go back to the sacks on the floor.

"Now," he heard the cripple say, "we'll give the old miller the slip."

"Thank Heaven for that," inwardly ejaculated the half-wit. "I'll try my hand in the pit when they're gone."

He saw the two men quit the mill together, but he waited half an hour longer before he moved. Then he made the rounds outside and came back with eagerness in his little eyes.

"Me find the box," said he. "I've been down there before. He loosened a stone, he said, and I'll find it."

With as much agility as the one-armed man had shown, Bob drew his body over the fringe of the pit. The water wheel was slimy and disgusting, but he cared not for that. Swinging lightly over the yawning abyss he was about to drop lower when something ran across

his hand. The half-wit muttered a cry, struck out at the rat and lost his balance!

In another instant he was falling down, down to the bottom of that terrible place. A cry rolled from his throat, but it was not heard. He bumped from stone to stone till he struck with a horrible thud in the depths below.

The next day when he was missing a search was made for the half-wit. Every nook and cranny of the locality was gone over. At last some one suggested the wheel pit, and there in the water Bob Selkirk was found. They brought him to the light and discovered that a spark of life still remained. One of the neighbors galloped to Middletown for Dr. Thomas Springer, who came at breakneck speed, but when he reached the mill the poor half-wit was dead.

Casper Remsberg told the doctor that Bob had "talked like a crazy man" just before he died, that he told in disjointed sentences a weird story about the one-armed man going down into the wheel pit with a little box, while another man held a light over the chasm. Nobody believed the dying man's story.

Five years later the miller was awakened from a doze by a singular noise. Opening his eyes he saw a man turning from the door of the pit which he had just closed. Old Remsberg sprang up and barred the man's way to the outer door.

"What have you been doing in the wheel pit?" demanded the miller.

The cornered individual who had but one arm, drew back and leered savagely at the miller.

"Don't you know me?" he grinned.

"Yes. You're the man who slept in the mill the night Bob was lost."

"I'm the man, but it's queer."

"What is queer?" cried Remsberg.

"I've had a fall since then and I hurt my head. Sometimes I am not myself at all and my mind goes gypsying as it were. I came back for it."

"For what?"

"For the box. My companion was killed two years ago and Katy wants the wedding present."

"Who's Katy?"

"His daughter. Ah, you don't know. What am I saying, anyhow?"

"You certainly don't talk right," said the miller.

"I guess I don't," with a smile. "Anyhow, I've been down there, but I can't find it. I'm sorry for Katy. She'll have to do without 'em."

With this the man passed his big hand slowly across his brow and turned away. It was all a mystery to the miller of Catoctin. The crippled man never returned. Remsberg kept secret from all save his wife the story of the one-armed man's second visit. It came to be known that the mill was haunted by Bob Selkirk's ghost and people who brought grists to it made sure to get away before night. In course of time the Remsbergs were gathered to their fathers, the mill changed hands and today it is a sorry ruin, the abode of the owl and the bat.

The mystery of the old place has never been solved. Who knows but that beneath the ruins where stood the ponderous water wheel is buried a treasure that would ransom a king? One thing, however, is certain. Katy, whoever she was, never saw the mysterious diamonds glitter on her snowy bosom.



IN MEMORIAM.

George Carlton Rhoderick, Sr., Died February 13, 1906.

I seem to hear the bells today
That toll so sadly far away,
Beyond the mountains low and gray
For one—my friend;
He lived to life's allotted span,
A kindly, true, unselfish man;
Wrapped up in home, his lifetime ran
Pure to the end.

He sorrowed with the sorrowing one,
He smiled with me when all was sun,
And now, to think his life is done—
All o'er at last;
I know that 'neath the casket's lid
The face I always loved is hid,
That now to see it I'm forbid,
For life is past.

I know that I will ne'er forget
His last words—they linger yet—
Spoken ere life's last sun was set,
And treasured so;
O, friend of mine, my heart today
Is with the stricken far away,
But this poor tribute I can pay
And voice my woe.

I'm sure that in a brighter clime,
Beyond the wedded mists of Time,

Beyond the bells that sadly chime,
New life is given;
For thee hath come that endless rest—
That blissful peace that calms the breast,
There's light upon the mountain's crest
That mirrors heaven.

What if thy path at times seemed long?
Thou gladdened it with many a song;
The Christian's faith in thee was strong;
Thy anchor held;
Nor winds nor tempests wrecked thy bark,
Tho' oft the seas around were dark;
The sunshine burst upon thy mark
And all was well.

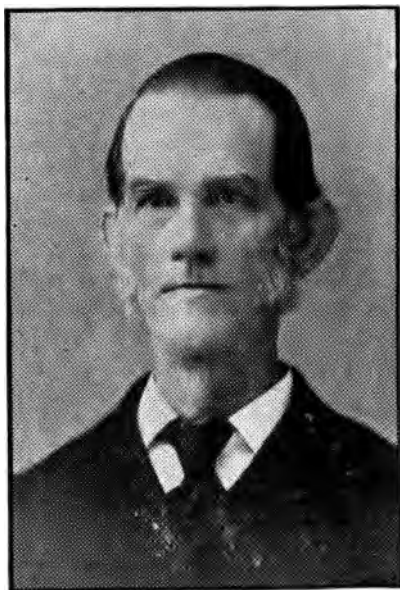
Farewell, my friend, the brighter morn,
The better day, for thee is born;
Tho' hearts with grief on earth are torn,
Thou'rt home at last;
Beyond the mists, beyond the sea,
Beyond the sorrows yet to be,
Safe in God's own Eternity,
Where grief is past!



THE STOLEN BRIDE.

A TALE OF THE OLD TURNPIKE.

JUST how to tell the story of the missing bride, I am almost at a loss to know. The incident happened so long ago that tradition has nearly forgotten it. Generations have come and gone, and but for the accidental mention of it in my presence the strange and



GEORGE CARLETON RHODERICK SR.

1950

mysterious occurrence of years would have slept on without notice. Even now I am not quite sure of my data, but it was in the early days of the old lumbering stages that crossed the mountain from Frederick to Hagerstown. This period by many years antedated the railroads and the trolley had not been dreamed of. Hagan's Tavern was in its earliest stage of existence and the Mountain House, now Dahlgren's, had but lately thrown open its hospitalities for man and beast.

I doubt not that more than one wedding trip was taken in the old stages. The journeys were made from east to west and vice versa. There were halts at the little inns that lined the road and the wedding couples were regaled on the dainties of mountain and valley. I believe that all these long-ago brides reached their several destinations in safety but one, and to this day the real termination of that wedding journey is as much a mystery as the burial place of Moses.

Night was closing in over Middletown Valley when a stage drew up in front of the hotel.

There were few people on the street, but mine host had heard the loud voice of the driver as he asked if his passengers could have a god supper for which even then the place was celebrated.

"You shall have the best I've got," responded Boniface. "And, by the way, as you know, Jack, there isn't a better table in the whole valley."

"That's what I told 'em," was the answer.

In a few minutes the occupants of the stage coach were seated in the modest dining-room of the hotel discussing the appetizing menu. That they were a bridal couple was apparent at first sight. The man was youthful in appearance and good-looking, his companion not past 20, fine appearing, of good breeding and intelligent. Truth to tell, they had been married that very day at a point between Baltimore and Frederick, the young

bridegroom being the son of the officiating minister, while his bride had been his playmate since early childhood.

The landlord's wife, with pardonable curiosity, took a great interest in her guests. She made it a point to be always near the table and conversation that passed between the couple she remembered for years afterward.

"I think we shall surprise Aunt Huldah," said the young bride, with a look at her husband.

Undoubtedly; I am at a loss whether to stop over night at the Mountain House or to go on to Hagerstown."

"Let us go on," said the young woman. "There's really no danger, the driver says."

"Perhaps not, Mary, but somehow or other I can't dismiss from my mind the threat Tom made. You remember?"

"Oh, that foolish remark was made a year ago," quickly answered the bride, whose face had suddenly lost a little color. "Besides, we haven't heard from him for months."

"Well, then, dear, it shall be Hagerstown," and the rest of the meal was eaten in silence.

When it was finished the young man took the landlord to one side and paid the score.

"The mountain's safe, is it not?" he asked with some show of anxiety.

"Quite safe, I believe. There hasn't been a robbery on top since the old drover from Hauver's killed the man who stopped him."

"Killed him, did he?"

"Yes. The drover had a good lot of money on his person and the footpad seemed to know of it. The robber was masked and when Mr. Bentz pulled the handkerchief from his face, lo! he discovered he had killed one of his neighbors. Served him right, though. There hasn't been anything bad on the mountain since."

Shortly afterward the old stage was lumbering through Middletown, headed toward South Mountain.

It was late in the fall and the cool winds fanned the faces of the happy couple who sat, lover-like, very close together, and indulged in post-nuptial whispers.

"She's a pert little thing," remarked the landlord's wife as the vehicle trundled out of sight.

"All brides are pert. You were once," laughed the man as he went about his business.

There was a dim water crescent in the sky and it did not afford much light. But the driver knew the way, every foot of it, and while he would have been content to put up at the Mountain House for the night, he knew that a good fee would be his if he kept on to Hagerstown. So he bowled down the pike, slipped through Koogle's bridge and mounted the ridge beyond.

By and by the bride fell asleep in her husband's strong arms and more than once he bent forward and imprinted a kiss on the soft white brow.

At one of these gentle manifestations of love she opened her eyes and uttered a little cry.

"What was it, dearest?" he asked.

"I thought—never mind, Alfred. I must have dreamed," and she laughed a little. "We're not there yet? No, no. How dark it has grown. Where are we now?"

"On the mountain. The driver says we shall soon reach the White House."

"I am glad of that."

"Then you want to stop there?"

"Yes. I think it best. What a foolish girl I am. Do you know, Alfred, I saw Tom in my dream," and he felt a shudder creep through her frame.

"We will see and surprise Aunt Huldah tomorrow. I wish we were at the Mountain House now."

The husband leaned forward and putting his head outside the stage, inquired:

"How far are we from the top now, driver?"

"About a mile."

"And the tavern is there, you say?"

"Right on the summit."

"We're going to put up there for the night."

"All right. Anything that suits you suits me," and the long-lashed whip cracked over the heads of the horses.

Alfred Crozier had won his fair bride after what might be termed a life-long courtship. Their love had grown with their years; there were no secrets connected with it; all the neighborhood expected that at the proper time the vows of their childhood would be consummated at the altar. Of course Mary Coffield had many suitors, but with one lover in mind, she had waited for the words which would bind her to him through life. The wedding had taken place after several announcements; everybody was prepared for it, and no young couple ever started out in life with more good wishes than the one that rode in the old stage through Middletown on the night with which we are dealing.

Of the man mentioned by the young bride—a disappointed lover—she had heard nothing since his rejection. The hot words which he had framed into a threat had passed from her memory only to come back in the midst of her happiness. It was said that he had gone away a soured man to seek employment in the then Far West, and as nothing had been heard of him, the neighborhood believed that he had succeeded.

Meanwhile, the stage with its two occupants was making its way up South Mountain.

In a short time the Mountain House would be reached and the night would be spent there.

As the vehicle gained a turn in the road which lies at



the foot of the last incline which leads to the old tavern, one of the horses shied and nearly toppled the drowsy driver from his perch. In a moment the man was awake.

"Hold up there!" cried a voice which emanated from the darkness.

The team was reined in and the driver leaned in the direction from which the demand came. His peering eyes made out the indistinct figure of a man and the next moment the nighthawk had leaped upon the hub of the front wheel and was thrusting a pistol into the Jehu's face.

"Not a word! not a move!" came in stern tones from his lips. "It will be worth your life if you stir an inch."

With this the speaker sprang down and ran to the rear of the stage. Crozier, who had heard all, was on the alert, and he involuntarily pressed his trembling bride to his breast.

The door of the vehicle was jerked open.

"Silence!" cried a harsh voice.

The frightened bride uttered a little scream.

In another moment a hand was tugging at her arm, while Crozier, drawing her back, was wishing that he had armed himself. The struggle was all too brief. Mary was dragged shrieking from her husband's embrace despite Crozier's resistance, and in another second—it did not seem longer—the young man was the sole occupant of the stage.

By this time the driver had recovered his composure and had leaped to the ground with the heavy whip in his hand. He caught sight of the struggling girl in the arms of a man. He saw Crozier spring from the depths of the vehicle and heard the cry that leaped from his throat.

"My wife! my wife!" cried the half-crazed man.

There was a fitting figure that ran toward the edge of the road which overlooked a little valley, a long cry of

terror from the lips of the young bride and silence followed.

Willingly would I draw a veil over the scene that ensued. For a moment Crozier and the driver stood petrified by the boldness of the night-raider. Such an abduction had never happened before on the mountain. It was the acme of villainy.

"We must find her—my wife!" exclaimed Crozier. "We will beat every foot of ground on this accursed mountain. And when I have found the devil, better for him that he had never been born!"

The search of the two excited men availed nothing. At last the stage raced to the summit and they burst upon a party of merry-makers at the old tavern. It did not take long to still every one with the story of the outrage. A posse was immediately formed and yet that night armed men and desperate, ransacked the vicinity of the crime.

Every foot of the ground was scoured. The unnerved husband had to be carried back to the tavern in a fainting condition when the search was resumed.

The man who had carried off the young bride had vanished as if the old mountain had opened and swallowed him.

All next day the hunt was on. Men came from everywhere, from Middletown, from Hagerstown and from the fastnesses of the mountain itself. Most of these men knew every trail in the neighborhood. Dogs were brought into action, the celebrated pack belonging to the Magruders was put into service, but the trail was strangely lost.

Weeks rolled into months without any tidings of the stolen bride. Alfred Crozier haunted the mountain night and day till he became a mere shadow. But one thing animated him, the recovery of the beautiful young girl whom he had wedded under the happiest of auspices.

The mystery of the mountain deepened with the years. People shunned the scene of the crime after dark and even during the day drove rapidly past it.

In course of time, however, it came to be nearly forgotten. After a lapse of thirty years a boy hunting squirrels on the mountain picked up a beautiful brooch. He carried it to the old hotel and exhibited his find.

An old man who sat in the darkened bar room came forward with innate curiosity. He took the brooch from the boy's hand, uttered a shriek and fell senseless to the floor. When he came back to life he declared that it had been his wedding gift to Mary Coffield, that she had worn it on the night of her abduction from the stage and that it had disappeared with his bride.

The brooch did not solve the mystery. Alfred Crozier carried it away with him and died soon afterward with it in his hands. Whether his wife had been carried off by the rejected lover or fell into the hands of a mere mountain prowler was never known. South Mountain gives up few secrets, and the one connected with the stolen bride is as deep today as when the beautiful young girl was wrenched from the arms of her husband and carried away.



THE DEATH OF RENO.

Amid the hills the tide of war
Did ebb and flow in red,
Among South Mountain's gorges lay,
The dying and the dead;
The stately pine trees, shattered, bent
Before the leaden rain.
And in their shadows brave men fell
Who'd never march again.

By Reno led, a line of blue
 Pressed forward in the fray;
Behind the stubborn walls of stone
 Crouched low the men in gray;
A flash of fire the boulders fringed,
 O'er all the rebel yell
Ascended to the Autumn sky
 And, stricken, Reno fell.

There on the ground in Wise's field
 With mortal wound he lay,
And looked his last upon the sky
 As ebb'd his life away;
Undaunted, on his soldiers pressed
 With blade and bayonet,
Until, upon their banners fair,
 The sun of victory set.

They bore the dying general down
 The mountain's reddened slope.
They knew the surgeon's vaunted skill
 With death could never cope;
Beneath an oak's far spreading limbs
 And in its gentle shade,
While onward rolled the tide of war,
 Was Reno softly laid.

There like a child he fell asleep,
 The soldier brave and true,
And many a tear that hour stained
 The uniforms of blue;
The drums grew still, the battle tide
 Had suddenly ceased to roll,
So that in peace unto his God
 Passed Reno's gentle soul.

Today the old oak throws its shade
And many children play,
Where in a crimsoned field of war
A hero passed away;
Fair Maryland's skies will softly bend
Above the mountain's side,
And Spring in green will clothe the spot.
Where gallant Reno died.



A MATCHLESS PANORAMA.

THE VIEW FROM BRADDOCK HEIGHTS.

IT WAS DANIEL WEBSTER who said, years ago, in the days of the old stage coaches, that in all his travels he had never seen a panorama of natural beauty like that which is unrolled to the eye from Braddock Heights.

If it was grand then, how much grander is it today, since history had added to its fame so much that is enduring? I have stood upon the rocky crest of Look-out Mountain, two thousand feet above the silvery Tennessee, with three great battlefields in view, and gazed into seven prosperous states of the American Union. You look in three directions, the wooded backbone of the mountain cutting off one side, whilst from Braddock the whole landscape stands revealed.

The brush of the greatest of the world's artists cannot give one an adequate idea of Braddock's scenery. From an historical point of view there is nothing like it in the United States. In fact, it fills more than one

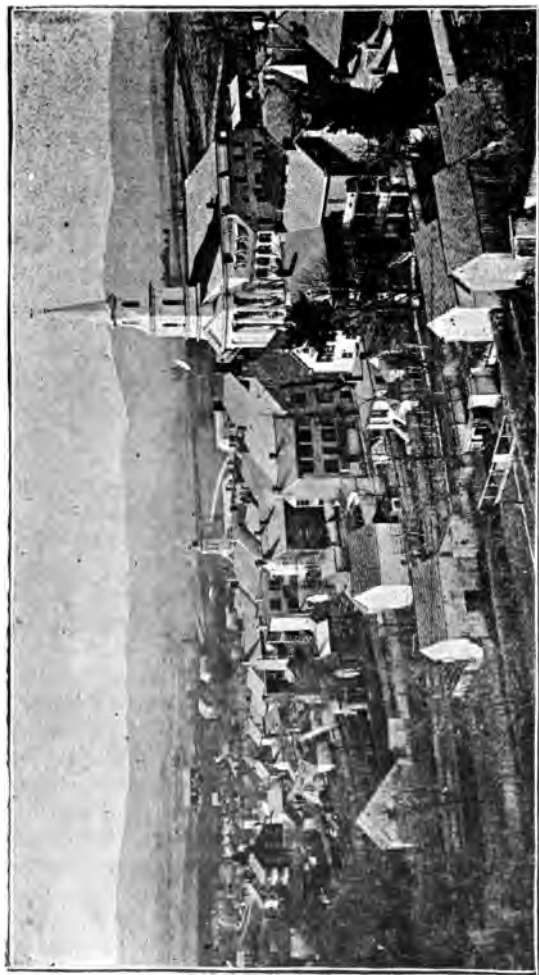
glowing chapter of the Nation's history and peoples, as it were, the Present with the mighty men of the Past.

It is a short glance that reveals the famous spring at the foot of the mountain, where more than a century and a half ago the red-coated braggart halted on his way down among the forests of the Alleghanies. One can almost see the scarlet coats where the old turnpike now runs, and single out the young Virginian who afterward became our first President.

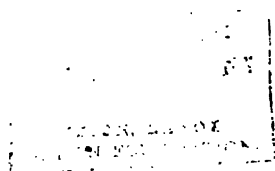
It was in Frederick that Washington and Franklin first met and formed a friendship that lasted until death. The whole scope of Western Maryland is a historical field and much of it is visible from the Catoctin crest.

To the observer looking West, the knob of South Mountain stands out in grand relief. On the wooded slopes of this lordly monarch of the Blue Ridge, McClellan and Lee measured blades in the battle Autumn of 1862. The gorges were filled with dead and dying men till the very ghosts of "the Old South" were driven in terror to their caverns. Run the eye further on and the gap at Harper's Ferry becomes visible, a spot made memorable by John Brown's fiasco and subsequent events of the Civil War. Between Braddock and the gap lies Crampton's Pass, where Blue met Gray in battle, and near which is Gapland, the picturesque home of George Alfred Townsend, the greatest of correspondents. Then, it is a short call to Turner's Gap, made memorable by the war, now occupied the famous South Mountain House, the beautiful Summer home of Mrs. Pierce, the daughter of the gifted authoress, Mrs. Admiral Dahlgren. A little farther north is Mt. Tabor, also connected with that sanguinary struggle.

Down yonder, like a silvery serpent creeping through the Valley, flows Catoctin, murmuring its song as it *sweeps* along through daisied fields beneath a turquoise



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF MIDDLETOWN.



sky—Catoctin, dear to the boyhood and girlhood of every inhabitant of Middletown Valley. Yonder gleam the spires of Jefferson, and there are Myersville and the cosy homes of Broad Run. Over there, again, are Walkersville, Woodsboro and Buckeyestown, the latter famous as the home of the Buckingham Industrial School. And away off there, within the eyesweep from Braddock is Pleasant Valley, swarming once with men in gray, within the bloody scope of battle. You can read so much history from this famous point of view that you never tire, but drink in the entrancement with the zeal of the ancients who never shunned the nectarine bowl.

Nor is this all. Almost at the foot of old Braddock, nestling like a pearl in its valley bed, lies Middletown, rich in historic happenings. More famous men have passed down its streets than any other town can boast of,—Washington to undying glory amid the forests of the Monongahela, Hayes and McKinley to the Presidency via the pathway of battle-crowned South Mountain. Over the old turnpike beneath you the rattling stages in the days of old carried Henry Clay to Washington and Black Hawk showed his feathers in front of the Valley Hotel.

We turn once more, and far against the horizon's rim, yet distinctly visible, is seen the depression where lies the field of Gettysburg, but nearer still is High Knob, the loftiest peak in the Valley, and White Rock, around which cluster Indian legends of rare beauty and awesome weirdness.

Turn once more a trifle, and Frederick, with its shining spires, greets the eye. Over there the Monocacy, slipping past the hills where Lew Wallace saved the National Capital, is followed by the trees that mark its course. There is history where its silver ripples flash in the sun.

One cannot look down upon Frederick from Braddock Heights without recalling its past. There was first opposed the obnoxious Stamp Act. From the day when her young men went forth to join the famous Maryland line under the eye of Washington, to the present, she has occupied no unimportant part in history. While we gaze down upon her glittering spires we recall Key, who gave us the "Star Spangled Banner," and who sleeps at Frederick. We see once more the armies that marched through her streets to South Mountain and Antietam. We almost see the wild honeysuckles that cluster over Barbara Fritchie's grave and hear the booming guns of Monocacy.

Look around once more. You cannot count the spires outlined against the circling mountains, and away off yonder rise the Peaks of Otter, wreathed with the legends of early Virginia. All this from Braddock Heights.

One may ascend the pinnacles that tower above Yellowstone Park or stand above the awesomeness of Niagara and not see so much. It is Braddock who, with pointing hand, reveals to one the book Nature, rich in history and legend. There is no other spot like it in all the land. Men climb to the summit of Junfrau to gaze upon a waste of ice and snow that tells them nothing. The Alps and the Appenines present bare Nature with no valiant deeds. Theirs is a panorama of vastness and nothing more. But the view from Braddock recalls much of the glorious past of our country, its beauty, its stirring events, its great men and women. Look where you will, the scene is "as fair as the garden of the Lord," one grand, inspiring Paradise that makes man better, and doubly proud that he is an American.

THE OLD SCHOOL HOUSE.

The other eve I climbed a hill
With thoughtful steps and slow,
A hill whose summit oft I sought
In childhood's "long ago."
And many a sweet thought came to me
As all alone I stood,
Where once the old brick schoolhouse rose
Close by the wavy wood.

It seemed to me that round me swarmed
Where thick the shadows lay,
The forms of schoolmates loved and dear
And faces passed away—
That there I heard, as oft of yore,
The voice of Bill or Joe,
And felt the touch of cherished hands,
That mouldered long ago.

I heard the bell the masters rang,
(They sleep beneath the sod,
Their only aim in life to serve
Their country and their God),
And then I thought how few remain
Of Valley belles and beaux
Who climbed with me that little hill
So many many years ago.

Not one of all the playmates old
Seemed absent while I stood
Where once we swung our sweethearts in
The shadow of the wood,
And while I tarried on the ground
Their footsteps to and fro
Kept time to loved and holy thoughts
Of life's sweet long ago.

I know that some are far away,
I know that some are dead,
The footsteps of the living cross
The paths we daily tread;
But ah, the sweetest thoughts that came
To me that sacred hour,
Were of the ones who rest beneath
The leaf, the bud, the flow'r.

The old schoolhouse has been replaced
By one of statelier view,
The playground of today is not
The playground that we knew;
The children who with shout and song,
Run daily to and fro,
Look like the boys and girls who were
Our schoolmates long ago.

Before I left the holy spot,
The dearest one to me,
Though I have seen the richest lands
That lie 'twixt sea and sea,
I asked for it the blessings sweet
Of those above who know
What memories often cluster round
The scenes of long ago.

I thought that footsteps followed me
That evening until
I passed again the village gates
That ope below the hill,
But often in the hours to come
To me my thoughts, I know,
Will wander to the old playground
I loved so long ago.



MIDDLETOWN SCHOOL HOUSE.
RECENTLY DESTROYED BY FIRE.

NEW YORK
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ANDERSON, LENOX

1892

DOCTOR BEAR'S PATIENT.

WHAT is wanting, sir?"

It was in these words that Doctor Charles Bear, one of the practioners of Middletown, addressed a man one night in the middle fifties, as the stranger stood on the steps of the well-known office on Main Street.

It was a murky night in November and a cold wind came from over the mountain and touched the cheeks of both. The man who had called the Doctor out was a person whose face was half muffled, and it was with difficulty that the keen-eyed physician, who was a good reader of men, could arrive at an idea of his identity.

"It's a hurry call," was the reply. "I have been sent for Doctor Bear. You're the man, I suppose?"

"I am Doctor Bear."

"Yes. You are wanted immediately at the South Mountain House."

"What's up there?"

"Something's happened there. I can't explain for I was sent off post-haste for you, Doctor."

It was not a pleasant night for one to be out, much less to make the journey down the winding pike to the old establishment on the summit of the ridge known as the South Mountain House, later the home of Mrs. Admiral Dahlgren. Doctor Bear had been out worse nights, but he had not been feeling well all day and had made one trip near Myersville, from which he had but lately returned. However, he was never known to shrink from duty.

"I'll come," he said after a moment's hesitation. "I'll have the buggy brought out—"

"There's no need of that, Doctor," interrupted the

caller. "I'll take you out and bring you back. My rig is at the door."

In less than five minutes the man of bearing was seated in a small rig drawn by a nervy little horse, and was moving out of Middletown, whose lights were visible on every side. He may have noticed that his companion's face was partly concealed by a high overcoat collar, but he did not become inquisitive.

"You don't drive this road very often?" he ventured at last when they had passed through sleeping Bolivar.

"No; the road's comparatively new to me."

Then the driver of the rig lapsed into silence which was not broken until they began to climb the real mountain.

"I hope you'll find him alive," said the stranger. "I heard 'em say it was a serious case."

"It's an accident, then?"

"I—I think so, sir."

At last the lights of the South Mountain House became visible and the buggy halted in front of the old hostelry, famous in those ante-bellum days. Doctor Bear alighted nimbly, taking out his black medicine case and went towards the house.

As he approached the door it was opened and a man appeared.

"Did you get him, Joseph?" asked a voice.

Doctor Bear answered the question in person and at sight of him the door was opened wider and he was asked inside. A sense of warmth greeted him and he was shown at once to one of the rooms off from the tap, or lounging room. His observing eye took in everything at a single glance.

"There's your patient, Doctor," said the man who had admitted him, and he pointed to a form on a bed at one side of the room. "We've done all we could for him and he's held out pretty well."

Having warmed his hands, the Doctor approached the bed and bent over the figure thereon. The white and ghastly face turned towards him was that of a handsome man of forty, smoothly shaven and intellectual. It was the face of a man in the higher walks of life, one who had evidently moved in the best of society, and the moment the eyes of the Doctor fell upon him, he knew he had no ordinary person to deal with.

What, then, was Doctor Bear's astonishment when he discovered that his patient was suffering from a severe gunshot wound in the breast—a wound but recently received? There was a chance for the man and he had reached him just in time.

Not a word fell from the lips of the patient till his wound had been carefully dressed. Then, looking up into the Doctor's face, he said, questioningly:

"You've got one, sir," was the reply. "An accidental shooting, I suppose?"

A wan smile gathered at the lips of the man on the couch.

"Yes, but it was my own fault. I thought I was a better shot," and the ashen lips came together with a click behind the last word.

Having seen his patient, Doctor Bear retired and went out into the tap-room where half a dozen men were standing and sitting. Among the former was a tall, handsome personage who leaned lightly on the bar with his thin hands daintily gloved. He looked for all the world like a Southerner.

"How's the Colonel, Doctor?" asked one of the others, and that moment the steely grey eyes of the man just mentioned became riveted upon the physician.

"We'll pull him through, I think."

The gaze of the tall man dropped to the floor and he played for a moment half-abstractedly with one of his gloves.

The next moment he turned to a man who rose from a seat as he caught his gaze, and said:

"I guess we'll go, John. Get out the horses."

The person addressed as John sidled from the bar-room and disappeared. The other followed to the door, but there he paused and faced the silent crowd.

"If he lives," he said, with something like a hiss, "we'll try it again; if he dies, all right."

With this he backed gracefully from the room and the night swallowed him up. A minute later the noise of hoofs was heard beyond the tavern and it was evident that two horses were plunging rapidly towards Middletown.

After a while Doctor Bear went back to his patient, expecting to find him asleep, for he had administered an opiate, but to his surprise a pair of lustrous eyes were awaiting him.

"Doctor," said the man, "you keep professional secrets, don't you?"

"Always, sir," was the ready response.

"I thought so. I heard horses just now. He's gone, eh?"

"A gentleman and his servant have just ridden off."

A little silence followed.

"We had it out in the woods back of the tavern," continued the Doctor's patient. "I won't be able to attend the opening of Congress. I really thought I could shoot better than that in the moonlight. I used to do it when a lad. We had but five paces between us and the pistols were fairly primed. I fought him with my own weapon. He had his, the Judge had. We stood back to back, and at the given signal turned and fired. I guess I must have missed him—I can't imagine why. I can throw a silver dollar in the air and hit it every time. Just think, Doctor, of missing a man like the Judge at five paces."

The query that rose unguardedly to Doctor Bear's lips he could not suppress.

"Judge who?" he asked.

"Never mind, please, doctor. It's a little affair of our own," was the reply. "We had to have it out some time, and here on the mountain was as good a place as any. It's all about a woman, the sweetest woman in the whole South, and as pure as she is sweet. I hope she'll never hear of this. What did he say before he left—anything?"

"He said, sir, that if you lived you will have to fight him again."

"That's right, Doctor. It's Southern blood, I guess. I'm tired now, and I'll sleep."

He went off into a sound slumber under the watchful eyes of the Doctor, who sat beside the couch and watched him for nearly an hour.

There were streaks of dawn in the East when Doctor Bear was landed in front of his domicile, and he retired almost immediately to his chamber. It had been an exciting night.

For three weeks he made daily trips to the South Mountain House in attendance upon his patient. He had not learned his name in all that time. The Southerner was progressing very well, and upon one trip he discovered that he no longer had a patient. "The Colonel" had departed and in his place was a lot of gold which more than paid for the Doctor's services.

A good custodian of professional secrets, the Doctor wondered what had become of his mysterious patient, and who he was. Not given to inquiry, he did not seek to penetrate the mystery for he found the people of the mountain tavern secretive, and he gradually dismissed the adventure from his mind.

A few years later the shock of war trembled the land from ocean to ocean. Doctor Bear was still practicing

in his cosy home, beloved by his fellowmen and keeping pace with startling events. Then came Lee's first invasion. The gray-clad legions of the doomed Confederacy broke through the mountain wall and swarmed into Maryland.

Frederick fell before the advancing hosts whose faces were turned westward with McClellan's impatient veterans hard upon their heels. Over the Catoctin ridge and down the dusty pike came the men of the angry South. As they trooped through Middletown Doctor Bear opened his door and came out upon the steps.

At that moment a column of infantry was passing the house. His attention was drawn to them by their gallant marching. In front of one of the swinging columns rode a handsome man on an iron-gray horse. His eagle eye roved from right to left and back again; he was the embodiment of a real soldier.

All at once his eyes met those of the Doctor. Suddenly a gloved hand was lifted in a military salute which Doctor Bear returned with a bow and the cavalcade passed on.

That same day the slopes of South Mountain were crimsoned with the blood of the brave. The men of the North lay beside their gray-clad enemies in the gorges and upon the moss-covered rocks of "the Old South." The services of Doctor Bear were called into requisition and he was busy among the wounded, one of them being a gallant Ohio officer who afterward became President of the United States.

It was the night after the battle when a countryman, racing through Middletown, drew rein in front of the Doctor's residence. He took from his pocket a bit of paper which was spotted here and there with darkish stains.

"The bearer will bring you to me," read the Doctor. "*You can trust him. For God's sake, come!*"



THE OLD U. B. CHURCH KNOWN AS "THE MARTEN BOX."

1917

1918

1919

1920

In an incredibly short space of time, Doctor Bear was hurrying towards the battlefield guided by the messenger. They hastened up the rugged slope and plunged into one of the forbidding gaps where the air was still heavy with the sulphurous smoke of battle. A tumble-down cabin rose suddenly before the pair.

"He's in there," said the guide. "I leave you here, Doctor."

The Doctor approached the hut and gently opened the door. The interior of the place was dark, but a voice soon fell upon his ears.

"Have you come, Doctor?"

The voice which sounded strangely familiar, goaded Doctor Bear forward. His foot struck against something and the same voice was heard again.

The practitioner drew a match from his pocket and, reaching out, struck it on the nearest log.

The patient of the South Mountain House lay before him!

"I don't know where you'll find him," said the man, with a grim smile. "We had it out today on the mountain while the battle raged. My wife died three years after our first meeting, Doctor; killed by the slanderous tongue of that villain. I left the United States Senate when my State cast her fortunes with the Confederacy. The Judge also followed his State into the vortex of war. We sought out a secluded spot on the mountain and had the old feud out. It had to come. You can't do anything for me, Doctor. The little girl who waits for her papa will wait till the Golden Gates swing wide. You've kept the secret of the duel, Doctor?"

"It has been a professional secret," was the answer.

"I knew you would keep it. Now turn me over. It was a Yankee bullet and not his, thank the Lord, that got me on the mountain today. He fell dead at my fire and then came the rush of those Western men.

There, that will do, Doctor. It's better to die satisfied than victorious in battle."

The Doctor of Middletown folded the Colonel's hands upon his coat of gray and stole from the cabin. The secret of the strange patient of the South Mountain House was his still, and not until shortly before his death did it pass his lips, and then only to one of his bosom friends.



POLLY SNURR'S ELOPEMENT.

MISS POLLY SNURR, who lived on Snurr's Manor, some distance west of Middletown, was fond of cats. That is to say, she had reached that unknowable age when the gentler sex takes up with good-natured tabbies and other pets. One might have seen about the Manor numbers of felines of every color: black, gray, brindle and otherwise. Miss Polly was partial to the tortoise shell variety and the household favorite was a beautiful specimen of this uncommon breed.

The person who spoke in praise of the Manor cats was pretty sure to find an open door to their owner's good graces, and, strange to say, every peddler who came up the lane to the Manor house at once launched forth in admiration of the feline race, and especially had some compliments to pay to the several specimens that greeted him in the front yard.

Miss Polly, at the time of which I write, was owner and sole occupant of the Manor. Had she been a few years younger and not quite so fond of cats, she might have had suitors by the score, for the Manor was a desirable place and its soil highly productive. She had views of

her own about matrimony as well as about other things, and when some of her acquaintances dared to twit her about her prospects which seemed to be waning, she curtly declared that when "the right man" came along she would consider the matter. And not a single moment before. She was a reader of the fashionable novels of the day, the lurid love tales of Mrs. Gaskell, Jane Austen and Mrs. Southworth, the latter just coming prominently before the public, and one or all of these authors may have laid the foundation for the incidents I am about to narrate.

One day a rather well-dressed gentleman of forty drove up the lane to the Snurr domicile and inquired for its mistress. It was a perfect day in October and the trees of valley and mountain had just taken on the wonderful hues that characterize a Maryland autumn. Miss Polly came out on the porch flanked by two gaudy colored cats and watched the stranger alight from his buggy.

He carried a small flat package under his arm and as he halted in front of the ample veranda he executed an obeslance that would have done credit to a cavalier of the days of the Merry Monarch.

"Miss Snurr, I believe?" said he, and then, almost before the woman could make proper acknowledgment, he began to throw all manner of bouquets at the cats.

"I am a dear admirer of the feline family," said he. "There is nothing so beautiful in my eye, the ladies excepted, of course, as a well-bred cat. Cats are the most companionable and gentle of the animal collection and I do not wonder that the ancient Egyptians were an intelligent race, hence their adoration of the cat. You must be happy here, Miss Snurr, surrounded by such matchless scenery and with such delightful companions to contribute to your daily comfort."

A smile of exquisite pleasure overspread Miss Polly's

face. In short, she was captured at the start. The stranger was invited upon the porch where there was a large old-fashioned rocking chair, into which he sank, while the head tabby ensconced herself without ceremony in his lap.

"I drove out from Middletown," he proceeded, "on an errand which I hope will be mutually agreeable. I did not need to be told that you are an intelligent woman. Your face indicates that, and eyes are the true index of the soul. I have here," and he began to untie the package, "a book on the habits, diseases and philosophies of the cat, the best friend vouchsafed to humanity. It is a delightful volume and the several chapters of anecdotes of the feline family, culled from authentic sources from all parts of the world, are a poem. You will notice the magnificent illustrations, Miss Snurr, and I have no doubt that you will find among them counterfelt presentments of your own cherished friends."

The book was sold before he had half-finished his introduction and when the fair purchaser had paid the money the gentleman lingered. In all her life Miss Polly had never come in contact with such an agreeable personage. He was a traveler of wide experience, a suave, entertaining man, and when he mentioned, incidentally, of course, that his parents were born in the Valley on the banks of the Catoclin, he drove another nail into Miss Polly's good graces. He expected to make his headquarters for at least three weeks in Middletown, while he canvassed it and the surrounding country, but he was afraid that he would not find another person who, like himself, held cats in such high esteem.

It must be confessed that Miss Polly saw him depart with sincere regrets. She invited him to come again, saying, as an excuse for her promiscuous hospitality, that she was anxious to tell him how she liked the book. Mr. Reginald Dupont (Polly already liked the name)



MAIN STREET, MIDDLETOWN, LOOKING EAST.

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TILDEN FOUNDATION.

drove down the lane with feelings which I am not at liberty to describe. She watched the buggy till it vanished and then sat down to peruse the volume. It happened that one of her cats had been ailing for some days and finding in the book a formula for a similar case, she set about forthwith to prepare the remedy and with such success that before night that particular tabby became as lively as a kitten.

During the next week Mr. Dupont called twice, each time being accorded a warm welcome. He had not been very successful with the book, owing, he said, to the scarcity of cats at some of the houses where he had called. At one place he had the satisfaction of rescuing three little kittens from a watery grave, as a pair of wicked boys had just tossed them from Koogle's bridge into the raging waters of the Catoctin.

His visits to the Manor became so frequent that undue gossip took possession of the neighborhood. The jealous averred that Miss Polly was setting her cap for the book agent and wondered when the happy event would take place. If the gossip reached Miss Polly's ears she seemed to take no heed of it, but it was noticed that she visited the Middletown stores more frequently than usual and had been seen bargaining with a Frederick milliner for a costume of the latest style.

One afternoon a Miss Delauder, Polly's nearest neighbor, dropped in. Miss Ann seemed anxious to unburden herself for she was just too full for utterance. She drew from Polly that Mr. Dupont was an exceptional gentleman, such a one as a person would not find in a day's ride. He was a dear lover of cats which proved that he was a worthy gentleman.

"I don't take any stock in the silly rumors afloat," remarked Polly's visitor.

"Rumors? Of what sort?" was the prompt query.

"Why, you see, Polly, Mr. Dupont has been noticed calling here frequently——"

"And what if he has?"

"You know people will talk."

Polly looked away and smiled. The sun was just dropping below the mountain and perhaps she was admiring the effect of the crimson rays on the variegated foliage.

"I never concern myself with what people say," she answered, turning at last to her friend. "I reserve the right to entertain whom I please and, as I have said before, I find Mr. Dupont to be one of nature's noblemen."

"Which no doubt he is," coincided Miss Ann. "I have always said, Polly, that when you come to marry you would select just such a person."

A slight flush ripened the cheeks of the fair owner of Snurr's Manor and presently her caller slipped across the fields in the October gloaming with ideas of her own.

Somewhat important to relate, that very night Mr. Reginald Dupont called at the Manor. He had something very important to say and he said it in a manner which vibrated an echoing chord in Miss Polly's heart.

"Now," remarked the tenant of the Manor, after she had consented to become Mrs. Reginald Dupont, with the usual blushes, "I don't care for a church wedding, nor even a home affair. There is much excitement in an elopement, such as my dear Mrs. Southworth describes in her novels. Such an event has never occurred in the Valley and it would give the gossips something to talk about the rest of their days."

"I perfectly agree with you, Polly" said the accepted suitor. "I am of a most romantic disposition myself. My maternal grandmother was the heroine of an elopement and the marriage turned out to be one of the happiest ever heard of."

"Then an elopement it shall be!" exclaimed the de-

lighted Polly. "I have been thinking it out for the last few days," and she blushed prettily again. "We can depart from the Manor some night and dash over to Frederick where our happiness will begin."

Just then a huge black cat shot across the porch with a fiendish screech and pounced upon a stray feline that had dared to invade the premises. A battle royal at once ensued among the shrubbery at the end of the porch and continued till Miss Polly finished it with a handy broom, after which she came back to resume the interrupted conversation.

"It was that horrid one-eyed Delauder cat!" she explained to her affianced. "I don't think he will again invade the Manor soon, not, at least, until we return."

It was finally arranged between the pair that they would elope on the following Wednesday night, taking Mr. Dupont's outfit for the purpose, and it goes without saying that the groom-to-be went down the land that night the happiest mortal in the Valley.

Miss Polly prepared for the event with considerable secrecy. She mentioned to Hank, the hired man, that if she should happen to be absent any time, he should take entire charge of affairs, and, above all things, see that the cats were regularly fed.

Wednesday night came with a full moon, now and then obscured by clouds. It was just the night for an elopement, neither too dark nor too clear. At the appointed hour a buggy drove up the lane and a darkish form alighted. As the figure approached the veranda a ladder was found set against it and Miss Polly dexterously lowered herself from an upper window to the roof. Her enthusiastic lover assisted her to the ground and hurried her to the vehicle.

In another moment the pair went flying down the lane and towards the turnpike.

"Mrs. Southworth," exclaimed Miss Polly, "never de-

scribed an elopement just like this. We will never forget, dear Reginald, that our married life began in such a romantic fashion."

The by-road which they were traversing was one with numerous twists and turns. Now they were in moonlight and now in shadow. The horse increased his speed as they proceeded.

All at once from a stile on the left came a scream such as seldom assails mortal ears. The animal gave one mad lurch, the lines were jerked from the driver's hand and the frightened beast was running away.

"It was that Delauder cat!" screamed Miss Polly as she clasped her affianced in terror.

In another moment the tottering vehicle reached an abrupt turn in the road and over it went, the horse disappearing in a moment with the broken buggy at his heels.

Willingly, if I could, would I draw a veil over what followed. A couple of countrymen who escaped the fury of the horse came up at that moment and found two unconscious forms on the grounds. Recognizing Miss Polly, they conveyed her to the nearest house where she was cared for. When she came out of her swoon she inquired after her escort.

"Oh, he's all right, with the exception of a broken leg," was the reply.

Miss Polly groaned.

"It was his wooden leg," further explained the woman.

"What! his wooden leg? I didn't know—"

And she promptly swooned again.

Two days later, when Mr. Reginald Dupont drove up to the Snurr home, he was met by Hank, who handed him a note. It was in Miss Polly's handwriting and the gist of the communication was that she could only be a sister to him, but as for marrying a man with a wooden leg, that was out of the question.

Slowly and reflectively Mr. Dupont turned and drove away. The bubble had burst and the romance was at an end. He was never again seen in the Valley, and a few days afterward Miss Polly presented the book on cats to a neighbor who couldn't read and from that time on not a single feline, not even the pretty tortoise shells, was seen on the Manor.



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